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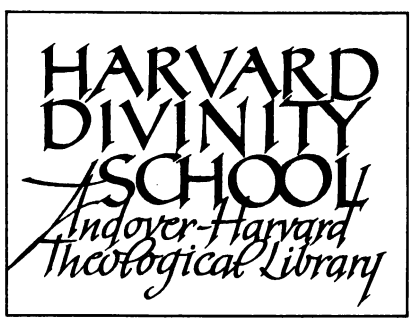
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A

SERIES OF LECTURES

ON

THE DOCTRINE

OF

UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE;

DELIVERED IN THE

UNIVERSALIST CHURCH,

IN LOMBARD STREET, PHILADELPHIA,

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1818,

AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE BRETHREN ATTENDING IN SAID CHURCH.

BY ABNER KNEELAND.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." JESUS.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
By Clark & Raser.
1818.

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Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit:

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the sixth day of November, in the forty-third year of the independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1818, Abner Kneeland, of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit:

"A Series of Lectures on the Doctrine of Universal Benevolence; delivered in the Universalist Church, in Lombard Street, Philadelphia, in the Autumn of 1818; and published at the request of the Brethren attending in said Church. By Abner Kneeland. 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' JESUS."

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D. CALDWELL,
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THE reader will please to take notice that nothing more than the substance of these *Lectures* has been committed to paper; and, perhaps, in some parts they are more concise than could have been wished, as many of the illustrations, as well as some of the arguments, are omitted; but, as the principal object was to *state* the doctrine of universal benevolence, as believed by the author, rather than to *defend* it, if they are only so explicit as to be fully understood, this object is gained: and the reader is referred to Dr. Lardner's Letter concerning the Logos, Dr. Priestley's History of the Corruptions of Christianity, Dr. Taylor on Original Sin, &c. and also the writings of the Rev. Hosea Ballou, now of Boston, for a defence of the same.

A few extracts have been made from the above writings, which, it is believed, have enriched the Lectures, and which, it is hoped, will be the means of bringing those works more into notice, particularly in this place.

Not being much accustomed to writing, and making no pretensions to erudition in literature, it is to be hoped that any deficiency either in style or composition will be charitably overlooked: the main object has been to write so as to be understood.

Such as these Lectures are, they are the result of a long, candid, and diligent search after truth; and as such, they are humbly submitted to the candid investigation and impartial judgment of the Christian world.

THE AUTHOR.

Philadelphia, Nov. 5th, 1818.

A SERIES OF LECTURES, &c.

LECTURE I.

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.—John, xvii. 3.

IN these Lectures, several things will be taken for granted: 1. that there is one God, who is the only proper object of supreme worship and adoration; and, 2. that God has not only revealed himself to his creatures through the medium of the great volume of nature, which is open to the inspection of all, but also through the medium of his son Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his moral character. For, notwithstanding these are proper subjects of discussion, and would not be refused on a proper occasion, yet they are foreign from our present purpose; and the discussion of them seems less necessary, since, as it must be admitted, "the invisible things of him (i. e. of God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Deity:" so, as it should seem, none but the fool can have the *audacity* to say in his heart, "there is no God!" The discussion of these subjects is also rendered unnecessary, in all Christian assemblies, by the consideration, that Christians of every sect and denomination admit the truth of divine revelation; "the record which God has given of his Son." Hence it is useless to take up time to prove that which will be ad-

mitted by all, or, at least, by all with whom at present we have any concern.

When we appeal to the holy scriptures, therefore, in support of any fact, unless it can be shown that the particular passage is either spurious, or else erroneously translated, it will be taken for granted that the evidence is conclusive.

It will be our business this evening to urge, not only the importance of the subject, but the necessity of attending to the same; and therefore this lecture will be designed merely as an introduction; and as such, it is thought the text is peculiarly appropriate. *And this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

How great, how important the subject! Was there ever one of equal magnitude proposed to the consideration of man? All other subjects, all other attainments, sink into nothing, when brought in competition with *eternal life.* For however valuable other attainments may be, in themselves considered, yet their use to us is but of short duration; and the time is approaching when they will cease to afford us consolation. Let us learn then to use the things of the world as not abusing them, knowing that the world and the fashions thereof are passing away. And when the things of time and sense fail us, what an aching void would be left in each of our souls, could we not lay hold on something more sublime, and more permanent! Eternal life is the cordial which we need; it is the healing and sovereign balm for all our woes.

If any thing be due, by way of gratitude or respect, to men of learning and science, who have spent their days in the discovery of the useful arts, in unfolding the riches of nature, by which the state of man is meliorated, and society improved, what shall we say of HIM through whom life and immortality are brought to light? who unfolded, not the treasures of earth, but the riches of heaven? whose kingdom was not of this world? who made manifest the glorious purposes of the Deity in the reconciliation and restitution of all things? who not only

taught the infinitude of God's love to man, but gave full proof of the doctrine in praying for his murderous enemies while in the agonies of death? who thus set the glorious example of *universal benevolence?* 'He was surely no less than the "power of God and the wisdom of God," as manifested in human nature. What shall we say of his disciples and followers, who not only maintained his doctrine at the risk of their lives, but defended it even in the hour of death? Can we suppose that such ardour, and such faithfulness, when they could not have promised themselves any thing of a worldly nature as a reward, was the effect of any thing short of the knowledge of the truth?

Our text implies that, not only a knowledge of God, but also, that a knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, is necessary to eternal life; or, at least, whether life eternal can be communicated in any other way or not, the text assures us that this knowledge is *eternal life.* The ancient philosophers of Egypt, of Greece, and of Rome, had all the means, except that which is revealed in the holy scriptures, of knowing God: yet how destitute were they of eternal life! So far from enjoying it at all, they were "alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance there was in them;" and all their ideas of a future state of existence were confused, dark, and obscure. Filled with superstition, their religious rites were too obscene to be even so much as named among Christians.

The Jews, also, notwithstanding the oracles of God were committed to them, yet as the true light was revealed to them but in part only, and *that,* through the medium of types and shadows, which often were mistaken, and with which they had mingled their vain traditions, (their leaders, also, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men,) had but very little knowledge of eternal life. And as they rejected their own Messiah, even Jesus Christ, whom God hath sent, so this blindness in part has happened unto them; and, even to this day, they are by no means in the enjoyment of that life which is eternal.

It is evident, also, that even the Christian, while he

tabernacles in mortality, enjoys this life, i. e. etei only by faith and hope; for "we walk by faith by sight:" and, again, "we hope for that whic not, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hop but if we hope for that which we see not, then patience wait for it." The nature of that life, th which we enjoy, which we believe to be eternal, wholly on the correctness or incorrectness of ou ledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he h If we can imagine a principle in God, or in Jesus whom he hath sent, incompatible with infinite an love to the chief of sinners, then we can suppose are in the enjoyment of eternal life, although (on of their not being so good in our estimation as ou we have no love for a great part of the human r we have discovered a justice in God, or in the law which requires an unmerciful punishment of an creatures, then, although we may know that we very unmercifully towards some of our fellow yet we may at the same time vainly imagine we a them good justice! And on this ground, no (or at least it is most charitable to suppose so, cruel and horrid persecutions on account of religi been, some how or other, justified in the breasts who were the authors or instigators of those eno Admitting these observations correct, you will see portance of our subject, if it be nothing more save the *religious* world from a spirit of persecu say *religious world*, because those who make no sions to religion will seldom persecute others f religious. But he who is brought to know Go that GOD who is LOVE, and that CHRIST who is t of the world, will view all mankind, however great their errors, as children of one common Parent, a as brothers and sisters of the same common knowing that God made of one blood all nations on all the face of the earth; hence, if he says h God, while he hateth his brother, he must know "is a liar, and the truth is not in him; for if he l his brother whom he hath seen, how can he lo

whom he hath not seen?" Let it not be supposed that this knowledge is too high for man, and therefore he cannot attain unto it. For "this is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." Let us take heed therefore that we do not make God a liar, by not believing the record which he has given of his Son. But, unless it were a truth that God has given unto us eternal life, we never could make God a liar by not believing it, because the belief in any thing whatever never makes the thing believed any more true than it was before it is believed; and unless it be a truth that God has given us eternal life in Christ, the Son of God, previous to our believing it, were we to believe it, we should believe a falsehood. But, permit me to ask, how can any one make God a liar by not believing that which is *not* true? The supposition involves an absurdity. No creature can be called upon by the God of truth to believe that which is not true in itself, or at least made so by the Deity, previous to any one's being called upon to believe it. Hence, all the Christian virtues must be considered the *effect* of the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and not the *cause* of that truth which they, by the grace of God, have been brought to know. To the want of making these proper distinctions may be imputed some of the greatest errors in modern divinity. A few of which may be here mentioned.

Young people, instead of being taught to know and understand the great interest they have in Christ, i. e. in the truth brought to light by Christ, by his life, his ministry, his miracles, his death, his resurrection and ascension into glory, are taught to seek to obtain an interest in Christ, &c. which implies that they have now no interest in him, and if they obtain one, it will be by their own exertions. And at the same time, and perhaps in the same discourse, they are told that they can do nothing of themselves, and if they ever have an interest in Christ, it will be all by the grace of God, without any works of their own! and then, to close by way of exhortation, they are called upon to be sure that they get an interest in Christ; not to give sleep to their eyes, or

slumber to their eyelids, till this work is done; for, if they should die without it, they must be eternally miserable!!

Such preaching, while it affords no peace, comfort, or consolation, to an honest sincere inquirer after truth, is calculated only to make hypocrites, or else drive people into despair.

Does not every child of God, who believes in the historical account of Jesus, know, that all which could have been or ever will be effected by his life, death, and resurrection, is as certain now as it ever will be? that every thing depending on his death, &c. is as certain as it is that his death, &c. took place? Yes: but then he is told, that if he will believe in Christ, the Holy Ghost will apply the merits of his death, &c. to him, i. e. the sinner, as an individual. But, it may be asked, what do they mean by the merits of Christ, unless it be the truth brought to light by his divine mission? And does not every sinner who is capable of exercising one spark of reason or common sense know, that this truth, whatever it is, does now apply to him as an individual, or else it does *not;* and if it do not, is it the office of the Holy Ghost to make something apply which does *not* apply? This would be like applying a garment to a man which by no means fits him! Or is it the work of the Holy Ghost to alter this garment until it will fit the sinner, although it now does not? No, this would not be *orthodox;* for he is not the *author*, but is only to *apply* the truth, or righteousness, or whatever is to be applied, to the believer: and how that can be applied which has no application in truth, I cannot even imagine. But if Christ have power over all flesh, as mentioned in the verse preceding our text, then the difficulty is solved at once. Unless the truth will now apply to the sinner, the sinner must be made to conform to the truth. Hence his pride must be humbled, his obstinacy removed, and his sin taken away; for all these stand opposed to that eternal life which Jesus has power to give. For "he that hateth his brother is in *darkness;*" which *darkness* is synonymous with *moral death:* and again, "he that hateth his

brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

This shows the necessity of Christ's having power over all flesh, in order to give them eternal life. For unless Christ has power over the sinner, he cannot give him eternal life, unless the sinner is pleased to receive it; but if he has power over him, then he can make the sinner willing in the day of his power.*

Our text also implies, that ignorance of God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, is a state of death. Hence an apostle has said, speaking of the gentiles, or unbelievers, they are "alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them." Now, can we suppose that this ignorance will eternally remain? I think not. I anticipate the glorious time when the vail which now hangs between all moral nature and eternal truth shall be removed. For God will "destroy the face of the covering and the vail that is spread over all nations." Then shall all know him from the greatest even unto the least; and then he will "forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more."

He who by faith and hope, or by the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ, is in the enjoyment of eternal life, is not only delivered from the gloomy idea of annihilation or nonexistence, but he is also saved from the still more corroding and heart-chilling idea of never ceasing misery. However remote the period, he anticipates at once the eternal enjoyment of a happy immortality.

What a rich treasure, then, this knowledge affords the believing heart! All the riches of earth and time, all the honours which men can bestow, or all the pleasures the world can give, are not to be compared with that knowledge which is life eternal. This knowledge is suited to every age, to every circumstance and condition in life. The rich need it to teach them how to use their riches; the poor, how to support their poverty. It is needful to the learned, to prevent their being puffed up

* Scripture references have not been given here, as it is probable these same passages will occur again in the body of the work.

with knowledge; and to the ignorant, as a substitute for learning. It sweetens every enjoyment of life; it solaces every affliction. It saves us alike from being elated with prosperity, or from being dejected in adversity. It teaches us how to live; it equally prepares us for death. It is a present help in every time of need. In youth, it teaches how to pursue the paths of virtue, in which alone there is peace. In middle age, it expands the soul with liberal benevolence and diffusive charity, which are so essential to the happiness and well being of society, teaching how to set good examples in the world, and especially before children, bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is the sweetest companion of human life: while, without it, the thoughts of death, methinks, must be almost insupportable. But to the aged and infirm, when they know that their sun of life is fast hastening downwards in the west, and that in a short time they must bid adieu to the world and all the things of time and sense, how comforting it must be to know they have "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!" And such knowledge is evidently contained in the scriptures, which testify of *Him* who is "the way, the truth, and the life."

This glorious truth, as astonishing as it may seem, is what mankind are prone either to disbelieve, or else to disregard. To some, it is too good to be true! To others, its truth does not meet their selfish dispositions; and by such, therefore, it is disregarded. While there are many, who are yet, from various causes, totally ignorant of it, who, it may be presumed, on proper evidence, would hail it with gratitude. But the number who as yet receive the truth in the love of it are comparatively few; though, we have reason to bless God, that number is fast increasing.

What I have proposed, therefore, in these lectures, is to set forth that plan of grace and unbounded benevolence, which, as I humbly conceive, is revealed and clearly made manifest in the scriptures of divine truth. In doing which, I shall speak with all due deference to the opinions of others; not differing from any one merely

for the sake of differing, but only where I have found sufficient reasons to satisfy my own mind in so doing. But, notwithstanding I may find myself under the necessity of proceeding in a different channel from some who stand very high in the Christian world, and, what is more, to differ in some respects from the opinions of those who agree with me in my general sentiment, it shall ever be my aim to treat all men with that respect which is due to the gentleman and the Christian. But, let it be remembered, that we must all stand or fall to our own Master; and all that I ask, either of friends or enemies, on account of my sentiments, is, not to judge, censure, or condemn another man's servant; for "to his own master he standeth or falleth."

I shall proceed, after this introduction, in the following manner, viz.

II. Speak of the nature and character of God, the relation in which he stands to his rational offspring, his design in the creation of moral intelligences, and the immutability of his purposes.

III. The creation of man; his original state and standing; his natural and moral faculties; together with his sin and disobedience.

IV. Of sin; its nature and its consequences; together with the denunciations of God against his creatures; all of which must be carried into effect.

V. Of salvation. Show in what it consists, and by whom effected. The vulgar notion of satisfying an infinite dissatisfaction refuted, and the doctrine of reconciliation explained.

VI. Of the *Mediator* between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

VII. The deliverance of the creature (which was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected the same in hope) from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

VIII. Objections to this glorious deliverance answer-

ed; by which the cruel and unmerciful doctrine of *endless misery* will be completely refuted, and shown to be not a doctrine of divine revelation.*

The above will constitute the *series of lectures* which I have proposed to deliver (if God permit) in this place; and to which the candid and serious attention of all sincere inquirers after truth are respectfully invited.

It is presumed that no one will object to the importance which, in this discourse, thus far, has been attached to our subject; nor to the consequences resulting from a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, to a certain class of people; viz. to those whom they are pleased to call real and true believers, or, in other words, to the *elect*. But if such be the happy consequences to all who are brought to the knowledge of the truth, or to such a degree of knowledge as firmly to believe in that truth which maketh free indeed, then even on this hypothesis it shows the importance of bringing all men, if possible, to know HIM, whom to know is eternal life. However, it will be one object of these lectures to prove, that what is properly called *salvation* is equally sure to *all*, whether they now know it or not, whether they now believe it or not; because the thing to be known, or to be believed in, exists in the immutable purposes of God, with whom there is no variableness nor even shadow of turning.

It is possible that some may be startled at the above idea, and feel disposed to attend no further; concluding, that if this doctrine be true, it is no matter how men live; all is equally well, let us live as we list! But, stop,

* Perhaps some may object to the harsh expression, *cruel and unmerciful doctrine of endless misery!* but I think they ought to be satisfied with it, unless they are able to point out some mercy in such *eternal torments!* And if there be no mercy in such punishment, then it is *unmerciful*; and if unmerciful, it is *cruel*; for if it be not cruel to inflict an *unmerciful punishment*, I wish some one would point out to me in what *cruelty* consists. Human governments, I admit, sometimes inflict unmerciful punishments, without designing to be cruel (though of this I doubt its expediency); but if it were equally in their power to make a good citizen of the culprit, would they not prefer a merciful punishment that should produce the desired effect? so that they could consistently grant a pardon?

my friend, not so hasty! Do you not believe in the certainty of the salvation of the *elect?* i. e. whatever may be your views of the doctrine of election, whether they are elected through sanctification and belief of the truth, or whether they were elected from the foundation of the world, is there not an *elect* whose salvation is sure? O yes, there can be no doubt of this. And will you say from hence, it is no matter what the *elect* do, since they will certainly be saved? On what does the salvation of the elect depend? On their being *elected?* or on their being *saved?* If on their being saved, then it is necessary to save them, notwithstanding their being elected; but if their salvation depends wholly on their being elected, then only let us be sure of our *election,* and all is well; it it is no matter whether we be saved or not!!!

My friendly hearers, do you like this mode of reasoning? No, I am sure you cannot. Then, remember, it is no better when applied to the whole world, than it is when applied only to the *elect.*

Had it not been the purpose of God to save *all men,* I cannot see why, by his grace, Christ tasted death for *every man,* or that the gospel should be preached to *every creature.* But if this be the purpose of God, viz. to save all men, will any one say that the means of salvation, or salvation itself, are less necessary on that account?

The salvation of which the scriptures speak, which will be shown more fully in the course of these lectures, is not a salvation *in,* but a salvation *from* sin. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Yes, says one, but it is *his* people whom he will save. I admit it; and do not contend that he will save any but his people. But who are his people? "He came to his own, but his own received him not." Yet will he not save them? Yes. "Out of Sion shall come the deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and so all Israel shall be saved." Again: Who are his people? Answer: The heathen are given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession: for "the Father loveth the Son, and

hath given all things into his hands:" and again: "he hath given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as he hath given him; and this is life eternal, to know thee," &c. God says, by the mouth of his prophet, "All souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine." If, therefore, the souls of all originally belonged to God, he could dispose of them as he saw fit. He hath given them to his Son; and in every sense in which they may be said to belong to Christ, in no such sense do they belong to the adversary, the devil; and in every sense in which men may be said to be the children of the devil, in no such sense are they the children of God.

Now, in what sense, and in how many senses, are mankind the property or inheritance of Christ? Answer: In three senses, at least. 1. By creation. "All things were created δι αὐτου και εις αὐτὸν *through him and to him*, or *by him and for him*." (Col. i. 16.) 2. By purchase. "He gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. ii. 6.) 3. By heirship. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed *heir* of all things." (Heb. i. 1, 2.) This threefold cord will not be easily broken.

Now, in no such sense is any one a child of the devil. None were created either *by* or *for* him; he has purchased none; he is heir to none. Hence, if he has obtained any, it is only by fraud and deception. In what sense then are they his? Answer: "His servants ye are to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey." Mankind, being deceived, have become servants of sin and Satan; and inasmuch as they are so, in no such sense are they the servants of Christ. To the Jews it was said by one who knew very well their character, "ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye will do." But in what sense were they of him? Answer: In character only. For he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. And they were murderers; or else they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. They denied the *Holy One*, and the *Just*, and desired a *murderer* to be delivered unto them. Thus, in character,

they were children of the devil, at the same time that, in reality, they were children of God. In this sense they were *lost:* as God says, "my people have become lost sheep, their shepherds have caused them to go astray; they have driven them from mountain to hill, till they have forgotten their resting place." And to redeem mankind from this lost state, and to bring them to be, characteristically, as well as in reality, the children of God, is the great object of salvation. But, to be children in this sense, Christ taught his disciples, that they must love their enemies, &c. For why? "That ye may be children of your Father which is in heaven." Whom does Christ mean by "our Father which art in heaven?" Does he not mean God? Most assuredly. Well, if God be our Father, are we not his children already? Yes: but Christ was teaching his disciples how to become the children of God in character; which they were not, until they possessed this heavenly principle of universal benevolence. "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Therefore, to be his children in character, without which no one can be happy, we must love our enemies, bless them who curse us, and do good unto them who despitefully use us and persecute us.

Thus I have endeavoured to set forth, in as plain a manner as I could, the object of the proposed lectures; and the candid attention which has been given thus far (for which you have my grateful acknowledgments) shows the interest you have taken in the importance of the subject.

Nothing will be attempted, especially in what is committed to writing, by way of eloquence or oratory; for I can truly say, in the language of the apostle, "I had rather speak five words with the understanding, so that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." And this is too often the case, when a speaker soars into the regions of fancy, in order to bring forth something to please the ears of his hearers.

To communicate truth to the understanding is my only object; and for the sake of this I shall take the liberty to use "great plainness of speech." And that these lectures may be blessed to the instruction of many beyond the sound of my voice, they are now committed to paper.

LECTURE II.

God is love.—1 JOHN, iv. 8.

WHAT I have designed this evening is to speak of the nature and character of God; his relation to his rational offspring; his design in creating moral intelligences; and the immutability of his purposes.

When we speak of the nature of the Deity, our words should be few, and fitly chosen. For none by searching can find out God to perfection. We know him only through the medium of his works and through the medium of his word. We have no conception of his *essence;* and as to his *nature,* whatever it is, one truth seems to be obvious; i. e. his nature is ONE, and *indivisible.* But few of the inspired writers have spoken of the nature of God; and no other has expressed it in so few words as the beloved disciple John, the author of our text. *God is love.* Another apostle has said, "Our God is a consuming fire." But, in order to reconcile these two apostles with each other, without allowing a contradiction, (which we shall by no means admit,) we must construe the fire, by which God consumes, to be the fire of *divine love.* On this hypothesis, there is no contradiction at all; but it teaches us at once the nature of those objects which this fire will consume; to wit, that which is opposed to divine love.

If God be love, all his attributes flow from this heavenly and divine principle; wisdom and power, justice and mercy, are only different modifications, or manifestations, of that divine nature which is love.

On this ground, therefore, we may fix upon certain *data,* from which we never need to swerve in all our searches and researches after divine truth. For when we have discovered the rudiments or first principles of any science, we know that every thing in that particular art or science is built upon them, and that nothing contrary to them can be true. As, for instance, when the

schoolboy in mathematics has learned fully to understand that two and two make *four*, he knows it as well as his teacher, or the greatest mathematician; and in all his study afterwards, he will never find any thing which contradicts it; and of course he never could be persuaded or convinced that those two members added make *six*, or that they do not make but *three*. And these observations will apply with the same and equal force in theology, as they do in mathematics.

When the child of God is brought to understand that *God is love*, he knows it as well as the greatest divine; and in all his study in divinity afterwards, he never will find any thing but falsehood that contradicts it; neither will he be persuaded to believe that God is *hatred*, or that he is any thing inconsistent with infinite and divine *love*. And, furthermore, until he can be convinced that he is erroneous in this his first principle, although he may find many passages of scripture which he does not fully understand, yet he knows very well what they do *not* mean; viz. they do not mean any thing inconsistent or incompatible with this proposition, *God is love*. Yea, he would sooner be convinced that the scripture itself is not true, or that, some how or other, there is a mistake about it, than he could give up his first principle: which, while he hath a *thus saith the Lord* for its support, he cannot do.

On this ground, therefore, we shall stand; believing all which can be justly inferred from our text is eternal and immutable truth. We stand as it were upon an ocean, with neither shore or bound. Our limited sight can only see so as to comprehend a small portion; yet, as far as the eye can extend, we see it to be the same; and we believe it to have no bounds: what is it then? A globe of water! And even this similitude gives us but a faint conception of the Deity; because this globe is limited by its surface; whereas, God has no limits. Wherever he exists, therefore, (and there is no place where he is not,) he exists a God of LOVE.

Just so sure, therefore, as God is the God of the universe, he is love to the universe: and just so sure as he

s the God of any individual creature which belongs to he universe, he is love to that individual. For if God ɔe love to human nature, collectively, he is love to each ndividual which composes human nature. Because the whole of *every thing* is made up by a collection of all its parts; and unless God be love to the individuals, in their individual capacity, he is not love to the whole; because the whole embraces each individual. Of course, were it possible for God to cease to be love to any individual of the human race, that moment he did so, he would cease to be God to that individual; for *God is love.* If God loves a creature whom he has made for one moment, he loves that creature as long as it exists, let it be ever so long, as well as every moment of its existence; for *God,* every moment, *is love.* And if God has made beings who will exist eternally, God will love them eternally; for God is eternal, and *God is love;* or, *God* eternally *is love.*

All the above propositions appear to be self-evident, and grow out of the very nature of the Deity. Of course, they need no proof. For the mind assents to them as soon as they are stated: for it seems a moral impossibility that one of them should be false. How is it possible to maintain the contrary? We might as well undertake to maintain that God can cease to exist, or that he can cease to be what he is—LOVE!

God is also unchangeable. "I am the LORD, I change not," is the divine testimony. Of course, if there be a being in the universe whom God does not at this moment, or will not at any future period, love, it is obvious God never did love that being. But, on the contrary, if God loved man when he created him, he loved him with a perfect knowledge of all that he was, and all that he ever would be. For all events must have been ever present with him who knoweth all things. Why not, then, look upon them with the same affection? or with the same indignation? They surely must have been thus viewed by the Deity. And, therefore, what he loves, he always loves; and what he hates, he always hated. But, it may be asked, how can LOVE exercise a spirit of *hatred*

towards any thing whatever? Answer: Hatred is only a *want* (or the absence) *of love;* and love itself cannot love any thing opposite to its own nature, for this would be acting contrary to itself; and this *want* or *absence* of love is termed *hatred;* the same as the want or absence of *light* is termed *darkness,* or the absence of *heat* is termed *cold.* Sin, therefore, being opposed to the nature of God, he cannot love it, or behold it with the least allowance as an ultimate object, for this very reason, because he loves the sinner. And if he love the sinner, he must disapprove or hate whatever would, if perpetuated, essentially injure the object of his love. But it may be still asked, if God cannot love sin, or behold it with the least allowance, why does he suffer it to exist at all? why did he not prevent it altogether, as it was undoubtedly in his power? This will be more fully answered when we come to treat upon sin. Suffice it to say, for the present, "God meant it unto good;" and if sin can be overruled for good, then it was suffered, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the good which is brought about in the infinitude of the wisdom of the Deity, who superintends and governs all events; so that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice and permission. But it will be seen at once, that this hypothesis limits sin, both as to its nature and its consequences, otherwise no good could come of it. For how can God bring good out of an infinite evil, when he is no more than infinite himself? If sin and holiness are both infinite, both have existed from eternity, and both will exist to eternity; which is the old Manichean error of two eternal principles, *good* and *evil.*

2. Under this article, *God is love,* it will be proper, as I have proposed, to speak of the relation which exists between God and his rational offspring.

It must be obvious to every one who is capable of exercising any reason at all, that there is the same natural relation existing between God and all animated nature, man not excepted; and in this sense, as the wise man has expressed it, "a man has no pre-eminence above a beast—yea, they have all one breath—all are of the dust.

and all turn to dust again." (Eccl. iii. 18—20.) But it is no less true that there is a moral relation existing between God and his offspring man; as St. Paul, appealing to the Grecian poets, has said, "We are also his offspring." For unless there is a moral relation between God and man, how could man be subject to a moral law, any more than other animals? The moral faculties given to man prove this moral relation; and it is the only principle on which man can be considered accountable to his Maker. Where there is no moral capacity, there is no moral accountability; and every man is accountable to his Maker exactly in proportion to the degrees of capacity which he hath given him to understand his moral law. But it is the height of absurdity to suppose that he who has but one degree of capacity to understand a divine or moral law, is equally accountable as the man who has ten degrees or more.

It will be seen, however, at once, that this limits the accountability of man; and if his accountability be limited, his criminality is limited, of course. But this subject will be more fully explained when we come to treat of sin.

If there be a moral relation between God and his offspring man, it is evident that this relation, in its nature, is exactly the same to each individual of the human race, notwithstanding the different degrees of capacity which may have been implanted in their moral nature. The father stands in the same relation to all his children, notwithstanding their different dispositions, or different degrees of capacity. As the relation does not depend at all on the capacity of the children, so different degrees of capacity, or even a total want of capacity, does not alter the relation.

This relation is immutable, and coexistent with the existence of the parties. If a child revolts from its parent, or the parent abandons the child, it does not destroy the relation. And it is on the principle of this relation, and this relation alone, that an obligation can be maintained on the part of the child, or a right to govern on the part of the parent. Hence, if a parent be under the least

obligation to a child, in consequence of having been the means of bringing it into the world, that obligation must continue as long as the child is dependant, and the parent is able to provide for its support. This obligation cannot be destroyed by the conduct of the child, let that be as it may; for, the obligation having existed previous to the child's having done either good or evil, the obligation cannot be either increased or diminished by the conduct of the child; and to argue otherwise would strike at the root of all civil society. It will be seen that I am not arguing on the principle of merit; but am speaking of that obligation which grows out of the common law of our moral nature, and the relation which exists between parents and children. The argument, therefore, will hold equally good, and infinitely more forcible, when applied to the nature of the Deity, and the relation which exists, and ever will exist, between him and his rational offspring.

"If ye are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers," saith an apostle, "then ye are bastards and not sons." This shows that the apostle considered the relation between God and all mankind the same; for if any are not his children in a moral sense, (God forgive the inquiry,) on what principle, or by what right, does he chastise them?

When we see a person correcting a child, what do we naturally infer from it? Answer: 1. That the person correcting is the parent, master, or guardian of the child: and, 2. that the correction is designed for the good of the child. And if we should be justified in making any other conclusion, we should certainly consider the correction not as disciplinary *chastisement*, but as *abuse*; and that there was something very *wrong* in the person correcting. "He that spareth the rod," saith Solomon, "hateth his son." Hence, a man may use the rod of correction, and yet love his son whom he correcteth. A correction in love, however, is not unmerciful.

On this principle we may see that justice and mercy are not two opposite attributes of the Deity, as has been

too often imagined; and hence it has been concluded that,

"A God all mercy is a God unjust."
YOUNG.

But if justice and mercy be opposite to each other in their nature, neither of them can be infinite; and although this will not be admitted, in so many words, yet conclusions have been drawn which amount to about the same thing. For it has been supposed that, just so far as mercy is displayed, justice is dispensed with, (at least, as it respects the creature,) and just so far as justice is executed mercy gives up its claim. I am well aware that it has been attempted to be shown that, with respect to the objects of mercy, justice is satisfied in another; but the futility of this will appear when we consider the immutability of justice. How is justice satisfied? or how could it have been satisfied, with that which it *did* not require? or how could it give up what it *did* require, and yet be satisfied?

All this difficulty will be solved, by only supposing that justice does not require an *unmerciful* punishment; and that mercy will not oppose a *just* punishment. For a punishment, to be just, must have in view for its object some good, and a good too, which overbalances the evil; hence, (unless it be inflicted from the law of necessity, which will not apply to the Deity,) the punishment must embrace the good of the individual punished, or else it does not embrace the good of the whole; because the good of the whole (of any thing whatever) includes the good of each individual of all the particulars which compose that very whole.

Now the question is, does mercy ever oppose such a punishment? Certainly not. For if it did, mercy itself would oppose the good of the creature! Is it so? says the hearer, let me look at the statement again. If mercy oppose a punishment designed for the good of the sinner, then, inasmuch as it does so, mercy opposes the good of the sinner. It is so! Nothing can be more plain! O then, God forbid, that we should have such dishonourable thoughts of *mercy!* that darling attribute

of heaven! No, this cannot be, *mercy* must ever be the sinner's best friend. Ah! my dear sir, I am glad to see you have such honourable views of mercy; but permit me to inform you, my worthy friend, that it is only a mistaken notion of divine justice, which has led men to suppose that the justice of God any more opposed the salvation of sinners than his mercy. It is not *justice*, but it is *cruelty*, that would inflict an unmerciful punishment! And that tenderness, which sometimes exists in earthly parents, which would withhold a just punishment, is not *mercy*, but it is *weakness!* Thus, on this ground, we shall see justice and mercy meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other, in the salvation of man.

It is on this moral relation that God claims the souls he has made as his own. If the relation were destroyed, they would be no longer his; if not his, they could not sin against him. For if all or any part of mankind have ceased to become the children of God, in the sense we are now speaking, and have of right and in justice become the children of the devil; then the only sin they can commit, while in this state, is, in keeping the commandments of God, in disobedience to their rightful sovereign, the devil! For he who has a right to my person or being, has a right to my services; and it would be wrong in me not to submit. These statements are made in this clear light, that the absurdity, of supposing that the moral relation which existed between God and man in creation is dissolved by sin, might more fully appear.

If this moral relation be not dissolved, then the reign of sin and Satan is altogether unjust, unrighteous, and unlawful. The question now is, whether God will ever *sanction* this reign, and settle the adversary of souls peaceably over the greater part, or even *any part*, of those mistaken mortals whom he has deceived and led astray? and thereby declare his reign, which was altogether usurpation, unjust, and wicked, in the first place, now to be legal, just, and right? insomuch so, that he shall no more be molested in his dominions, to the wasteless ages of eternity!!

My soul shrinks with horror from the awful thought. If this be the secret of the Lord, which is with those that fear him, I can truly say, in the sincerity of my heart, "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united!" (Gen. xlix. 6.) For how can that, which was at first unjust, be made just by its long continuance? If the devil be the proper owner of any part of the human race, there can be no more justice, for aught that I can see, in God's attempting to redeem them out of his hands, (unless it be by a mutual agreement,) than there was in the serpent's beguiling our mother Eve! But the reconciliation and redemption of man is always represented in the scriptures as the work of sovereign power and goodness; destroying the works of the devil; subduing his kingdom; opening the prison doors, and letting the captives go free; and that too, without even asking the consent of the adversary; all of which presupposes his dominion to be unjust, unrighteous, and unlawful.

If it were to be contended that the dominion of Satan should finally be established over all the works of God, and that God will give up all his rational offspring into his hands, there are none but what would see its impropriety at once. Yea, to contend for such a doctrine as this, viz. that God will abandon the works of his own hand, and give them (i. e. human nature) all up to his arch-adversary, the devil, or, in other words, make them all *endlessly miserable*, would be giving the eternal JEHOVAH the blackest character possible!

I am well aware it has been contended, that we all deserve this; and, of course, it would be right and just in God, should he inflict it: but we ought in charity to presume that such do not realize what they say. Let them suppose a God diametrically opposite in all his attributes to the one they imagine, and in whom they believe; could he do any worse by his creatures than to make them all endlessly miserable? Certainly not. Then what are they contending for? Why, that an *almighty devil*, having the power to create human beings, could do no worse than what they say would be *right* and *just* for GOD to

do! O my God! forgive, I humbly beseech thee, the wounds which thy character receives in the house of thy pretended or mistaken friends!

But it is contended that man has had his choice; and he has chosen the way which has led to this *eternal death*. It is therefore his own fault, and he has no reason to complain.

With such fallacious arguments as these, thousands have been silenced, though, I presume, not satisfied. But this fallacy must be exposed. It has deceived mankind long enough. It does not help the matter in the least. For, when God gave man a law, did he not know his moral capacity to fulfil that law? and did he give him a law suited to his moral capacity, or did he not? The difficulty is in supposing that there was a principle of justice originally and inherently in the Deity, by which he made a law which could render it just for him to punish the transgressor unmercifully! If such an effect has been produced, this effect must, *a priori*, be traced to its cause; and, whatever we may suppose the means by which this effect is brought about, the cause was originally in God. But it is impossible that such a cause should exist in God, because *God is love:* whereas, this hypothesis supposes a principle the *basest* and most *malignant* the human mind can conceive of. Thousands reject with horror the doctrine of Calvinism, as they understand it, being shocked at the idea that God should create millions of human beings for the express purpose of being glorified in their *eternal damnation!* And yet, they are not disturbed at all at the idea that God should create the same miserable souls, with a certain knowledge, and that too at the time of their creation, that they would be *eternally damned!* soothing themselves with this idea; *why, the creature has had his choice, and if he be damned eternally, it is his own fault!* Now, for myself, I can see no difference in the moral character of God, on these two principles. They are, to me, both alike, horrid and abominable! If I am to be endlessly miserable, it matters not to me, whether God has fixed that to be my doom by an irrevocable decree, or whether

I am brought to this circumstance by any other means whatever; only let it be admitted that God knew this would be my fate when he brought me into being, and yet he gave me existence with this knowledge. But if he created me without this knowledge; and yet, if such an awful circumstance shall ever happen, it appears to me (O may the thought be forgiven, if it be an error) that both God and myself would be objects of pity; and yet, there would be no one in the universe who could help us! For I feel sure, that *that* God, who is LOVE, loves me so well, that he would be as much *grieved* at such a circumstance as I should, and therefore would help me, if it were in his power. See Gen. vi. 6, 7.

But God has all power, as well as wisdom and goodness. Whatever, therefore, his goodness dictates, his wisdom deviseth the plan, and his power carrieth the same into effect. We have no necessity, on this principle, of admitting any conclusion, however plausible it may appear, which, according to our understanding, would be inconsistent with infinite and divine love. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget," saith God, "yet will not I forget thee." God's love to his offspring is represented by the most endearing ties imaginable. "God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son," &c. for what? "not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." And again, Christ saith, "I came not to condemn the world, but to save the world." But I need not enlarge here, as these subjects will come more properly under our consideration hereafter.

3. I am to speak of the design of God in the creation of moral intelligences.

And here, let it be remembered, that none by searching can find out the Almighty to perfection. His ways are in the great deep, unfathomable by man. Therefore we should be exceedingly cautious not to attempt to be wise above what is written on these great and important subjects. If, however, we were permitted to draw a conclusion from what we know of the nature of the Deity,

respecting his motive or purpose in creation, that conclusion would certainly be favourable to man. For,

It will be admitted that all rational beings ever act with some motive; and that they have some ultimate object in view to which all other purposes must be subservient. Now, what must have been the ultimate object of LOVE, in giving existence to a rational being? Can any thing short of a communication of its own nature to that being, in proportion to its capacity to receive it, and, of course, to render the creature which he hath made as happy as possible, be considered an object worthy of such a heavenly principle as divine love? This appears to me to be the most reasonable conclusion; and therefore, were we left to draw conclusions only from what we know of the divine nature, this appears to be the only conclusion which ought to be admitted. But we are not left to reason alone for our guide. We have some divine testimony on this subject. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. iv. 11.) Here we have in express words the design of God in creation. All things, and, of course, all mankind, were created for the pleasure of the Almighty.

But what is the pleasure of our Maker? He has informed us, not only what it is, but also what it is not. "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) Now, if God have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and the wicked do die, it proves that the death of the wicked is not the ultimate object of God. He suffers it to take place, upon the same principle that he permits sin; not that he has any pleasure in iniquity, nor in the *wages* of sin, which is *death*, but in the good which will be brought about by infinite wisdom, through these means. It is the *life*, which God hath pleasure in, which the wicked enjoys after having turned from his wickedness. And who can say that the enjoyment of this life, i. e. eternal life, will not be greatly heightened by

this superabounding grace of God; which grace would not have been thus displayed, had it not been necessary in consequence of the offence of man. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. v. 20, 21. vi. 23.) Were we to annex the word *eternal* to the word *death*, in the above passages, they would contain palpable contradictions. If God suffer or permit *eternal death* to take place; and, much more, if he be the author of it, will any one undertake to prove he has no pleasure in it? For in this case, it could not be a way to an end or object, but it would be the end itself, and therefore the ultimate *object* of the Deity: and if we say that he has no pleasure in it, we must admit that God will be eternally displeased! And again: If the wages of sin be eternal death, how can God give eternal life to any, admitting the sinner receives his wages? And we are expressly told, and that too by this same apostle, that "he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." (Col. iii. 25.) In this case it would be impossible to give the sinner his due, which is *eternal death*, and at the same time give him *eternal life:* and if this life should be given to some and not to others, then there would be a respect of persons. But admitting the wages of sin to be simply *death*, and nothing more, then the sinner may receive his wages, yea, all his demerits, and yet this will by no means prevent him from receiving also the gift of God, which is *eternal life*, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Another testimony, which corroborates the one already introduced, we have in Prov. xvi. 4. "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." If God made all things for himself, he made the day of *evil* for himself; and if for himself, it was designed to answer some good purpose, not inconsistent with divine love; for *God is love.* Unless the

wicked are made for God, it would not be true that *the Lord made all things for himself;* and I should not be unwilling to admit that God designed the day of evil for the wicked, and that the wicked shall all be miserable in that day. But this by no means contradicts the idea of all things being made for God: neither does it prove that the *day of evil* is an *eternal evil.* If God made all things for himself, he undoubtedly means to be glorified in the things which he hath made. And does he mean to be glorified in the wicked, by perpetuating to all eternity the thing in which he has declared by his own life he has no pleasure? or by accomplishing the thing which he pleases? i. e. by letting the wicked remain in *eternal death?* or by giving them *eternal life* through Christ Jesus our Lord? The words of God by the evangelical prophet Isaiah, (chap. lv. 10, 11,) are very appropriate here. "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." With this testimony before our eyes, if we can only be satisfied as to the purpose or design of God in creation, we can have no doubt of that purpose, or of that design being fulfilled; but must feel assured that, in due time, it shall be carried into effect.

Much more testimony might be brought, if it were thought necessary, to show the original purpose and design of God in the creation of man. But it is believed to be wholly unnecessary. For, to suppose that God has given existence to any being whatever, much less to his rational offspring, man, with any other view or design than to do him good, reflects so much dishonour on the divine character, that it will be admitted but by a very few; and (it is believed) will be contended for by none, except it be by a bewildered mind, bordering on insanity.

When God created man, he either designed his happiness, or he designed his misery, or else, he was entirely

indifferent as to both. And the same statement will apply with equal force to each individual of the human race. The second proposition is contrary to his nature—LOVE—for love never designs the misery of any one. If it produces a temporary evil, it is only for the sake of a lasting good. Hence every act of God must be considered, on the whole, however evil it may seem in itself, abstract from final consequences, as producing a superabounding good. The third proposition, viz. *God is indifferent as to the happiness or misery of man,* virtually denies his existence. For a God without motives is no God at all. The first proposition, therefore, viz. *God designs our happiness,* must be true.

It may be observed, further, that the most important state, of any being whatever, is always the first, and, of course, the ultimate design of its author; and as the eternal state is the most important state of man, so this must have been the first and ultimate design of his Creator in bringing him into existence. This being the first, chief, and ultimate design, all others must have been subservient thereunto; and, of course, they are not the *end,* but only the *way* to the end. Again: We come to the same conclusion in this way. Whatever a rational being does, knowing at the time the consequences, he designs those consequences. He may, it is true, design them for good; or he may design them for evil; but, whatever may be his design in them, he no less designs them. Now, God either does, or he does not, know the eternal state of every individual of the human race the first moment of their existence; or, if you please, he knew this when he first created man: hence, if he created man, possessing at the time this knowledge, he did, and still does, design their final and eternal state. It is just so with man, i. e. with a rational man, as far as his knowledge extends. A man who acts without design, is a man void of understanding. And if there are any consequences attached to the actions of men, beyond their knowledge at the time, (which often is the case,) in such cases men are only instruments in the hand of God (or some one else) in producing those consequences; and

therefore such consequences are not chargeable at all to the account of the poor ignorant instrument, who knew nothing about them, and of course had no design in them; but they are chargeable to him, and to him only, who both knew and designed them. Now the question is, whether HE designed them for *evil*, or for *good?* O how easy it is to see here, that man's accountability is ever limited by the extent of his knowledge! But as God only is infinite, he only has infinite knowledge, and of course infinite designs; and therefore all eternal consequences, whatever they are, can be only imputed to HIM as their sole AUTHOR and CAUSE. To contend that man, or any other being, has been the cause of eternal consequences, either good or evil, is only to contend that man, or some other being, possesses one attribute of the Deity, viz. infinite knowledge; and, therefore, acts from an infinite motive, and with an infinite design.

From the above considerations, it evidently appears, that God, in the creation of man, must have had the same propitious designs towards each individual of the human race. "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." (Ps. cxlix. 9.) Amen! Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!

4. I am to speak of the immutability of the purposes of JEHOVAH.

This proposition is so self-evident, it is hardly susceptible of proof. Immutability seems to be a property essential to the Deity. Being infinite in all his attributes, nothing can be added to them or taken from them; and therefore they are not liable to change: hence he is unchangeable in all his perfections. And, what is very comforting, he gives this as a reason why the objects of his love are not consumed. "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." (Mal. iii. 6.) "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isa. xlvi. 10.) "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations." (Ps. xxxiii. 11.) The above passages, though few out of many that might be quoted to the same effect, are sufficient to prove that God is immutable in

his nature, in his purposes, and in all his ways. Hence his love and affection towards his creatures cannot be weakened, much less destroyed, by sin; neither can it be strengthened, much less produced, by the sinner's forsaking his sin and turning unto the Lord. The only difference there is, is altogether in the creature, and not in the Creator. The sinner, while in a state of sin, does not, nay, cannot, enjoy the love of God. Sin beclouds his understanding, and he sees his Maker through a false medium. He believes his God to be offended, yea, angry with him, when, at the same time, this supposed anger is nothing more than a disapprobation of sin, growing out of real love to the sinner. It is so with all good [earthly] parents. The displeasure which they manifest, on account of disobedience, grows out of real love and affection to their children.

This will lead us to discover the nature of forgiveness. Forgiveness, in imperfect and changeable creatures, i. e. in man, may be a real relinquishment of a punishment which was absolutely intended to have been inflicted: but not so with the Deity. He changeth not. Therefore, forgiveness in him can be nothing more than a manifestation of his unchangeable nature to the sinner. When this is done, the sinner discovers that his sins, however great, have not alienated the affections of his Maker. That the same love, and the same merciful disposition of his heavenly Father, towards him, as his offspring, still exists. This is all that is necessary; and this is all that can, with any sense of propriety, be meant by the forgiveness of sin. Forgiveness, therefore, does not militate against the idea of the sinner's being punished according to strict justice. For all the punishment which strict justice can require, without the least regard to mercy, must be designed either to do good to the punished, or to prevent evil; neither of which is incompatible with the nature of forgiveness. But to suppose a punishment not designed to do good, nor to prevent evil, such punishment is *revenge*, which can only arise from a spirit of malevolence; and to apply such a principle to the Deity, would be an impeachment of the divine cha-

racter. But all punishment, either productive of good, or preventive of evil, must be limited in its nature; for it is succeeded by the good done, or by the *absence* of the evil prevented, which is equally good; because the prevention of evil is good.

The selling of *Joseph*, by his wicked brethren, was wisely ordered by HIM who meant it unto good, and therefore necessary to keep much people alive. The keeping much people alive was the *good done*. And the destruction of that very people, who were thus kept alive, was the *evil prevented*. So the most afflictive dispensations in divine providence, we are often brought to see, are nothing more than blessings in disguise. Good old *Jacob* was led to say, "All these things are against me!" Yet how comfortable was the evening or close of his life made by that very son whom he thought had been torn in pieces by wild beasts. And shall we one day hear our spiritual *Joseph*, even JESUS, say, not only to us, but to all his brethren, as sinners, "I am *Jesus*, whom ye, by your sins, have often crucified afresh, and put to an open shame; but now be not angry nor grieved with yourselves that ye did it, for ye indeed meant it unto evil, but God meant it unto good, even your salvation, for I have died that ye might live?" Yes, methinks, this will be the language of Jesus to every ransomed soul. O, what emotions of mingled joy and sorrow, gratitude and grief, must fill every heart, when they thus behold their Redeemer, and thus shall hear the melting words of eternal truth! Sorrow and grief, to think they have been guilty of sinning against the best of Beings, or that they should ever have performed acts so unworthy of him, or of them, as his children; for sinning against the messenger of God, is sinning against God himself; and at the same time overwhelmed with joy and gratitude, to think that his wisdom, his goodness, and his gracious designs towards them, had been neither altered nor changed by their evil dispositions!

All our confidence in the Deity rests in our firm belief in his immutability. Did we believe him changeable, or even capable of changing, we could not place unlimited

confidence in him. But believing, as we do, in his immutability, that with him there is "no variableness, or even shadow of turning," whatever he has promised, we feel sure will be performed. "It is impossible for God to lie." (Heb. vi. 18.) It is on this ground that we place confidence in man: and hence our confidence in our fellow beings is only in proportion to the evidence we have of their firmness and stability; and also of its being in their power to carry their good intentions into effect.

Now, if there be any of the human race, to whom God is not love, for whom he has no thoughts of mercy, and who are not included in the covenant or purposes of his grace, how is it possible, in the very nature of things, that we should place full and unlimited confidence in him, as being love, or possessing any thoughts of mercy towards us? If there be but one individual of the human family, who is in this predicament, I may be, for aught I can know to the contrary, that very individual.

But perhaps it may be said, there is evidence by which the *elect* may be assured that they belong to this happy number, and are appointed to obtain salvation. But I may be permitted to ask, in my turn, if there be such a contradiction in the character of God, on what evidence can I rely?

I will suppose that you are under the dominion of a king, whose laws, you know that not only you, but that all the rest of his subjects, have transgressed; and you also know, notwithstanding there is much said about his sovereign and all-conquering grace, that he has predetermined to bestow that grace only on a very few, and that all the remainder are consigned over to irremediable wo and misery; would you, in such a case, be satisfied with any evidence, as coming from him, that he meant to do any better by you? I think not.

The objector may still say, as an apology for the character of this king, that he has promised to forgive all who repent and turn to perfect obedience: the subjects, therefore, have only to repent, and return to their allegiance, and he will certainly forgive them; for the king

is faithful to forgive all who shall faithfully repent. But here, in answer, the same difficulty again occurs; it is the goodness of the king, and nothing short of a manifestation of that goodness to the subject, which can lead him to repentance: short of this, he has no power to repent: and the king, inasmuch as he has predetermined that some should not be forgiven, so he has determined to withhold that goodness from them, which alone can lead them to such a repentance as he will accept. Here, again, we are brought up!

It is perfectly clear to my mind, and, from what has been already stated, I think it must be pretty clear to all within the sound of my voice, or who shall hereafter read these lectures, that every scheme of divinity which limits the plan of divine grace to a part of mankind, or admits into its system the idea that God is not equally good to all his creatures, (taking into consideration their different degrees of capacity,) is founded wholly on a mistaken notion of the nature and character of God: and his purpose, in showing no mercy to those whom they are pleased to call the *finally impenitent*, (a character, however, of which we have no account in the scriptures,) may be traced to a principle the most *base* and *malevolent* of which the human mind can form the least conception. And did the authors of such systems believe that God would in fact deal with all men, as, according to their hypothesis, it must be supposed he will and does deal with some, would they be able to discover one good principle in him? No, I am sure they could not. And notwithstanding their blinded and deluded followers (as I must think them to be) sometimes have the audacity or the vanity to tell God that his throne would have been for ever guiltless, if he had left all mankind to perish! Yea, more, if he had made them all as wretched as they believe he will make some, i. e. *endlessly miserable!* yet, I must be permitted to think that if they believed this would be the case with themselves, and should realize for one moment its awful truth, they would think God to be verily and infinitely the worst of all *beings!* None of the gods of the heathens, not even *Baal* or *Moloch*,

were ever thought to require such cruelty. The Moloch of the heathens, whose image for a time was set up by the Jews, in Tophet, in the valley of the son of Hinnom, where they made their innocent infants to pass through the fire, could be fully satisfied, as they supposed, with the momentary sufferings of these innocent victims: but the Moloch of the Christians requires the misery of millions in another world: yea, more, when they have suffered ever so long, for millions and millions of years, his wrath is no nearer appeased! He still requires just as much misery as ever!!!

O, ye blinded Christians! Say not that I have misrepresented the character of the Being ye profess to worship. It is but the echo and counterpart of your own preachers; only put in little different language.

But I will dwell upon this horrible picture no longer, i. e. at present; and if any thing has been said which is thought to savour of a want of friendship towards any class of people, I can assure them that no such thing has been intended. I do really believe that the creeds of men, still followed by a large majority of the Christian world, contain within themselves fundamental errors; and it is only for the sake of undeceiving those who have been deceived by them, that I use this *great plainness of speech.* I say, *followed,* rather than *believed;* for there are many who follow those creeds, and aid in supporting the abettors of them, because they are popular, or from some other cause, best known to themselves, of whose understandings I have too good an opinion to suppose they *believe* them.

He who is brought to know God as he is, i. e. views his character through a correct medium, always beholds him in the same lovely, amiable, and propitious light. He considers him a fountain, yea, an exhaustless fountain, of immutable and eternal goodness; communicating at all times the greatest possible good to all his creatures. Seeing the end of all things, and at all times, from the beginning; not being subject to any contingency or disappointment. Whatever his goodness dictates, his wisdom deviseth the plan, and his power carrieth the

same into full and complete effect. In him, power never degenerates into *weakness*, wisdom into *craft*, justice into unreasonable *severity*, nor mercy into *cruelty*. But all his attributes, flowing from his own eternal and immutable nature, LOVE, concentrate in the best good of all his creatures. If his children go astray, he corrects them in loving kindness and faithfulness; and all his chastisements are dealt out according to the multitude of his tender mercies, like as a father correcting a son whom he loveth. Although he sometimes deals out judgment without mercy to those who have shown no mercy; yet, in the end, mercy always rejoiceth against judgment. He doth not *always chide;* because he delighteth in *mercy;* nor does he keep anger for ever, *lest the spirits should fail before him and the souls which he hath made.* He is the same nature to all; as he is the same God to all. He stands in the same relation to all beings of the same nature; and a change of the nature of a being would be the change of being. Hence, man would be no longer man, if his nature were changed. And so sure as man is man, God must have had the same gracious design in the creation of all men, that he had in the creation of any; and, being perfect, he can neither revoke nor alter his gracious and glorious purpose. Having all means at his command to effect his infinite designs, he has arranged them all in the best possible manner, and each will be brought into operation in the best possible time. So it is as possible for God to cease to exist, or cease to be what he is—LOVE—as for one of his purposes to fail.

O how happy! how inexpressibly happy! are all those, who can look up with faith and confidence to such a Being! He is the source to which they flee in every time of distress: not, as to an ideal or imaginary being, who has no power to save, but as to a kind and affectionate Father. Does fortune frown, and pale adversity stare the humble believer in the face, he can look to the Giver of every good to alleviate his wants, to mitigate his sorrows, or otherwise (what may be of equal value) to give him fortitude under sufferings. If abundance flows into the lap of plenty, and nature itself seems to smile upon

all his labours, the child of this beneficent Parent will not be unmindful of the fountain of all his blessings; but, with a heart overflowing with grateful acknowledgments, will go to him for all the wisdom which he needs. Has guilt found its way into the human heart, in consequence of some disallowed sin in an unguarded hour, tears of grief in silent supplication to him who seeth in secret will bespeak *that* sorrow which worketh repentance: the wounded spirit unbosoms itself in penitential cries to God for mercy; which fervent prayers (if in sincerity) never fail to be answered in those pious resolutions which are here formed for the observance of a future life; which resolutions, being kept, seldom fail to produce the desired effect. But what can be said of those who are conscious to themselves that they have been guilty of aggravated sins which have produced unparalleled guilt? The case, surely, is shocking and trying. Yet, on this system, the very chief of sinners need not be, neither is he, driven into despair. But, like the prodigal, he recollects his father's house, where there is still bread enough and to spare; and returning to it with shame, though without hesitation, he finds the same reception as the prodigal did. But, suppose he dies, and has no chance to return; what then? Answer: If he die in his sins, he receives the wages of sin, which is *death;* but it does not necessarily follow that he has no chance to return. We should take care we do not set bounds to the grace of God, or limit the Holy One of Israel. But this objection will be more fully answered in its proper place.

I admit that death would have been eternal in its consequences, had it not been for the eternal life which God has given us in Jesus Christ our Lord. But, "as the Father hath life in himself, so he hath given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him power of all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as he hath given him." (John, v. 26. xvii. 2.) And, as has been already shown, he hath given him all things: for Christ himself says, "All that the Father hath are mine." But although the consequences of death would have been eternal, had it not been for eternal life, yet the conse-

quences would not have been eternal misery; but an eternal extinction of being; for death is an extinction of life.* Hence, natural death puts an end as much to moral death, as it does to natural life, because a man cannot be even *carnally minded* in a state of natural death. "He that is dead is freed from sin." (Rom. vi. 7.) And the apostle argues that the believers in Christ, having been planted into the likeness of his death, being buried with him in baptism, &c. ought to be as dead to sin as though they were actually dead; *for he that is dead is freed* (Gr. justified) *from sin.* Now, if that death, which is the wages of sin, be endless misery, then nothing short of *endless misery* would free or justify any one from sin! But if it be simply death, then death frees or justifies any one, and every one, from sin, having fully received its wages. Yet, by this alone, no one would have eternal life. Thus it will be seen that eternal life is the free gift of God, and purely by grace, i. e. *favour;* for this is the meaning of the Greek word χαρις, rendered grace.

Thus we have laid the foundation or ground-work of our future discussion. And if the premises which we have laid are false, the whole superstructure will be a mere delusion. I mean, if our ideas are erroneous in regard to the nature and character of God, (for these are the only data which are essential to our final conclusions,) all our conclusions will be false. We may be erroneous, perhaps, in some other points, and yet our general system be correct; but if our ideas of the nature and character of God be erroneous, then our whole system of faith, being built on those ideas, must also be erroneous. And these remarks will apply to all other sys-

* It will be perceived here that the author does not believe in an intermediate state of conscious existence between death and the resurrection; and of course death, to him, is an extinction of being; and all his ideas of a future state of existence is predicated on the glorious doctrine of the resurrection. This point will not be laboured in these lectures; but if any one thinks otherwise, he is requested to read attentively Dr. Priestley's Disquisition on Matter and Spirit; and unless he is thereby convinced of its truth, nothing which the author of these lectures could say on that subject would be likely to convince him.

tems in divinity, as well as to ours; and with the same or equal force. Now it will be obvious, even to the smallest capacity, who shall be capable of reading these lectures, that the character of God, as here stated, is essentially different from that which is found in all those creeds, which limit his grace to a part of the human race. Therefore, if any of those creeds be true, in this particular, our's must be false; and, *vice versa*, if our's be true, those must be false. And, furthermore, it appears to me, that no honest man, if he be fully convinced and persuaded in his own mind, can conscientiously do any thing either to support or propagate an error so important as the one alluded to above.

It is right, however, for all men to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." The noble Bereans, of old, searched the scriptures daily to see whether these things were so; and in this they were more noble than those at Thessalonica. There is no harm, therefore, in imitating their example. But after any one shall be fully convinced, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the doctrine contained in these lectures is, generally speaking, *false*, I cannot ask him to support it, or do any thing to encourage it. The only favour I can ask of such ones is, not to persecute, either by word or action, those who sincerely believe the doctrine true. And,

To conclude this lecture, let us take care that we ever give the same privilege to all, which we ask of others. We may take the liberty, and no doubt ought, to make use of every argument in our power to expose what we believe to be error, and to propagate what we believe to be truth. But our weapons must not be carnal. Let us, therefore, use only the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, which is mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds.

Let us imitate our divine Lord and master, who had compassion on the ignorant, and those out of the way; meeting our brethren at all times in the spirit of meekness and brotherly love.

We have altogether the advantage of our religious opponents: for, according to the doctrine we preach, and

in which we firmly believe, we must look upon them, however erroneous, and however *sinful* now, as being heirs of the same eternal inheritance, subjects of the same grace, and objects of the same divine love, with ourselves. Whereas, on the other hand, and according to the doctrine which they preach, and which charity authorizes us to suppose they believe, we may be heirs of a kingdom diametrically opposite to the kingdom of Christ, in which they hope to gain admittance; for according to them, we may be subjects of endless wo, and objects of eternal hatred! Hence, if they do not manifest all that love, all that cordiality and friendship towards us, which we feel towards them, we must impute it to the malevolence of their doctrine, rather than to the want of a good disposition.

But it shall be our aim to break down, if possible, these separating partition walls. To teach our opponents that we have all one common Parent, and all we are brethren. And the same God over all, is rich unto all, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

LECTURE III.

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Rom. viii. 20.

IT is proper to observe here, that the words *in hope*, in the text, not only in the Greek, but also in the Latin version, are placed in the next verse, and after the colon: and that the particle ὅτι, rendered *because*, in the beginning of the 21st verse, is generally rendered *that*, and is so rendered in the 16th, 18th, and 22d verses of this very chapter. Taking the words *in hope*, therefore, into the latter member of the sentence, as they stand in the original, a full and justifiable reason is given for the fact here stated, viz. *the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, &c. in hope that the creature itself also,* (or *that even the creature itself,*) *shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

This glorious deliverance is not the subject of the present lecture; but will be taken up hereafter.

What is proposed this evening is, to consider the creation of man; his original state and standing; his natural and moral faculties; together with his sin and disobedience.

It must be obvious to all, even of the smallest capacity, that the original organization, or constitution of man, whatever it might have been, was just such as God was pleased to have it.

Nonentity, certainly, could not offend. Unconscious matter, before it was organized into a conscious being, could not be displeasing to the Deity. Even so, man could not disobey, until he was not only conscious of his existence as a moral being, but also was made sensible of the law that was given him, and which it was his duty

to keep. Man, therefore, existed in every sense as man, before he could have been a transgressor. The question now is, whether man (which is the creature here spoken of) was made subject to vanity, in his original constitution or creation, or whether he was made so afterwards, in consequence of transgression? I shall contend for the former; though the latter has been generally considered the truth.

And here, that I may not unintentionally wound the feelings of any, it may not be improper to premise a little, by apprizing the reader, (as I did the hearer,) that I shall be under the necessity of doing violence to my own conscience, as well as to my own understanding and sense of propriety, and also, as I conceive, to the scriptures of divine truth, or else take different ground, and proceed in a very different channel, from what is considered *orthodox* in the Christian world. But whether I ought to follow the divine testimony according to my own understanding, or follow the vain traditions of men, the reader must judge.

If a person should be ordered by the government to erect a new and commodious edifice on the site of one very ancient, and perhaps almost rotten, (which, being in a tottering condition, and ready to fall of itself, must be taken down, in order to give place to the new,) the persons interested in this old building, seeing it beginning to shake, and the foundations giving way, would in all probability not only be alarmed, but also offended: for they do not yet believe that the new building will ever be erected; or, if it should be, they are apprehensive they shall not like it so well as the old, to which they have been so long accustomed; and therefore, as this old building contains their last and perhaps only hope, they are loth to part with it. And can this be wondered at? Certainly not. It is perfectly rational. But could they but only be convinced that the new edifice will not only be erected, but that they will have an equal interest in it, and also that it will be much better than the old, (inasmuch as it will accommodate the whole family, a quality that the old building, by many, was never thought to

possess,) I say, let them be convinced of all this, and they will not only be willing to see the old building demolished, but will help to pull it down themselves. But, (asking pardon for the above digression,) we shall return to our subject.

The creature was made subject to vanity. Now, who made this creature? God? or man? Not man, certainly; for man must have been *made* before man could act. It is therefore equally certain that God made man subject to vanity, as it is true that God made man at all.

If man was tempted, while he was in his original state, then he was subject to temptation. Did he fall? Then he was certainly fallible. Did he sin? Then he was capable of committing sin. And this too, in his first, original, and, what has been generally considered, holy state.

Now how was man tempted? The apostle *James* says (ch. i. 14.), "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." But if the first man was tempted in any other way, then here is an exception to this general rule. But if here was no exception, then it follows that our first parents were made with the same propensities which we, their children, possess. Which will bring me to consider,

2. The original state and standing of man.

And, first, let it be observed, that there can be no sin in what exists in man originally, i. e. constitutionally; nor in all the temptations to which he is liable in that state. For sin consists not in being tempted, but in giving way to temptation. The great *High Priest* of our profession was capable of being touched with the feelings of our infirmities, and *was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.* (Heb. iv. 15.) This shows that sin does not consist in temptation. The original state of man, therefore, was a state of innocence; though subject to temptation, and, through the imbecility and weakness of his nature, or want of experience, liable to err.

Where, then, shall we find, or in what consisted, that original *righteousness*, which, it is supposed, man possessed, previous to his transgression? If this means in-

nocence, it is what every child of Adam possesses when it is born into the world. But if, by *original righteousness*, any thing more than *innocence* be meant, what evidence have we that our first parents possessed it? This is often *asserted*, often *referred to*, and often *appealed to*, as a standing *maxim* in divinity; but where is the evidence on which this doctrine is predicated? I have diligently sought, but have not been able to find it.

In regard to outward circumstances, our first parents, according to the account, certainly had fewer temptations than any of the human race have had since their day, or, at least, since the giving of the law by Moses. Man has now to eat bread by the *sweat of his face;* whereas they were in a garden of delights, planted by the hand of their Maker, where every thing grew spontaneously for their comfort.* We are surrounded by various temptations, which assail us on every side, but from which we are both morally and religiously bound to abstain; they were both morally and religiously free, except one single prohibition! Now see the trial. Do we discover any serious struggles of conscience? any great conflict with the adversary? any attempt to resistance? No! Nothing of this kind! But no sooner were they told by that subtle deceiver, who was a liar from the beginning, that the forbidden tree was good for food; that it was to be desired; that God knew it was good to make one wise; and that they should be as gods, knowing good and evil, they take of the fruit thereof, and eat, and, seemingly, without hesitation. So far, therefore, from discovering a couple of righteous beings, struggling against sin, and with the greatest compunction of conscience, reluctantly yielding to unparalleled temptation, it looks a thousand times more like two innocent, inexperienced, and unsuspecting children led away by a deceiver; or else, perhaps, following the natural inclination of their own propensities.

As a contrast to the above, permit me to mention but one instance of the struggles and conquests of virtue

* That is, on the supposition that the account is literally true.

since that period. I shall select the memorable youth, *Joseph*, who was hated by his brethren on account of his dreams, as a pattern of moral virtue. See him at an early age (for he was but *seventeen* when his father made him the coat of many colours) taken from his father's family, and, of course, from his father's instruction, and by his wicked and treacherous brethren sold to a company of Ishmaelites, who carried him down into Egypt. Go with him to the house of Potiphar, see him sold as a slave to this military officer, in whose esteem there was nothing to recommend him but his virtue and faithfulness. See him rise, by degrees, in the esteem of his master; behold the confidence he places in him, in making him overseer of all that he hath. And now comes both his trial and triumph of virtue; and that too, over temptation unparalleled. It needs neither the pen nor the pencil to paint it; the simple fact speaks for itself; while the future imprisonment and history of Joseph is a sufficient testimony of its truth! Here is a trait of character more luminous in point of virtue and integrity, than can be shown during the original standing of Adam. And if this be not a specimen of *righteousness*, and even of complete *holiness*, what is it?

But it may be said, that Joseph had been *renewed;* as we read, *the Lord was with him.* (Gen. xxxix. 3.) Admitting this to have been the case, was he in a better condition than Adam was, while in a state of innocence? That Joseph, however, had been renewed in the sense of the *orthodoxy* of the present day, is much easier asserted than proved: for if he had been renewed, why have we not equal evidence that Ishmael was renewed, of whom it is said, *the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman;* for it was also said of him, "*God hath heard the voice of the lad——and will make of him a great nation.*" And again, "Behold I have blessed him." (Gal. iv. 30. Gen. xvii. 20. xxi. 17, 18.) Does God hear the prayers of *unrenewed* men? or does he bless unrenewed men (according to the doctrine of the schools) or not? But we are not attempting to prove that other men have been either holy or righteous, since the

days of Adam; but only to show that Adam gave no evidence, neither is there any evidence, of his being any more holy or righteous, by nature, or in his original state, than other men.

There is one text, which may perhaps be brought as an objection to the above, and as proof of the original righteousness of man. (Eccl. vii. 29.) "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man *upright;* but they have sought out many inventions." Here I shall appeal to Dr. Taylor, whose erudition, as a Hebrew scholar, I am inclined to think, will not be called in question, as proof that the Hebrew word here rendered *upright* has no reference to any inherent *righteousness* or moral *virtue;* but would have been more properly rendered *right,* i. e. God made man just as he intended to make him, a rational intelligent being; capable of moral action, and yet liable to err; or, in the words of our text, God made man *subject to vanity;* and, of course, being subject to vanity, *they have sought out many inventions.* It does not necessarily follow, however, that all the inventions of men are vain; some are of a contrary character; for, man being made *right,* he is as capable of doing good as evil; and I must be pardoned for thinking that he is much more inclined so to do. I cannot but think, whatever may be the opinion of others, there are many more inventions in the world which are *useful,* and some very much so, than there are of those which are even *useless,* and much less, of those which are *pernicious.* The text under consideration, therefore, while it gives no proof of a state of original righteousness, superior to that state of innocence in which every one is born into the world, (as it will be perceived,) affords no proof of the supposed fallen state of man.*

It has been the labour of the clergy for many centuries to degrade the most noble creature of this lower crea-

* The note from Dr. Taylor, which was intended to have been inserted here, (and for which I have written to my friend at New Hartford,) having not arrived, and not being able to find the work in this city, must be omitted. If it should be received in time, it will be inserted at the end of the work.

tion, *man*, and sink him, if possible, even below the brutes. Yea, to make him think of himself, and of his fellow-men, as being by nature, even worse than the brutes; a kind of *devils incarnate!* And what is all this for? They must pardon me, when I state what appears most likely to be the truth, but what, at the same time, I could wish to see proved false; viz. It has been with a view of raising themselves, and a few of their peculiar friends, in the estimation of the world, many of whom are their deluded followers, as a kind of *demigods;* or, at least, a superior order of beings to the remainder of the human race! And what gives them this superior excellence? It is not because they are so much better members of society than others; possessing more moral virtue, &c. (for, as far as this is the case, we are happy to give them credit,) but because they vainly imagine that they have been miraculously or supernaturally wrought upon by the spirit of God, which has changed them from an original state of sin and pollution (into which they and the whole human race had fallen, by reason of Adam's transgression) to a state of *holiness!* Of this original sin and corruption we shall consider presently. That the above is nothing more than the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy (Luke, xii. 1.), will more fully appear as we* proceed.

Dr. Adam Clarke, in his late notes on the Bible, as well as many others, has laboured hard to show, not only the superior understanding and excellence of our first parents before their disobedience, but also the change which took place in their nature, in this respect, in consequence of transgression. How he has succeeded will best appear by carefully perusing his notes; and for this purpose they are recommended to the reader. "They seem," says he, (i. e. our first parents,) "in a moment not only to have lost sound judgment, but also *reflection:* a short time before Adam was so wise that he could name

* The reason I frequently make use of the plural pronoun *we*, is, I consider the reader with me, and as assisting me, in this investigation.

all the creatures brought before him, according to their respective natures and qualities: *now* he does not know that first principle concerning the Divine Nature, that *it knows all things;* and that it is omnipresent, therefore he endeavours to hide himself among the trees, from the eye of the *all seeing God!*" Now, is there any evidence that Adam possessed this knowledge of God before he sinned? or that he could not name creatures after he sinned as well, and as correctly, as he did before? I can only say, if there be any evidence of either of these facts, it has entirely eluded my search. No, so far from obtaining this evidence from reading the Doctor's learned and ingenious notes, they more clearly evince, to my understanding, the truth of the maxim, that *great men are not always wise!* But, to proceed.

Under this article it will be proper to take notice and consider the present condition of man, as standing in relation to their father Adam. This will bring us to consider more fully what is called *original sin;* i. e. the sin which human nature is supposed to lay under in consequence of Adam's transgression.

What befell Adam, by reason of his sin or transgression, so far as we have been able to discover, was nothing more than what now befalls every son or daughter of Adam in passing from a state of innocence (in which state we shall consider all men until they are proved otherwise) to a state of sin and disobedience. The question now is, whether this sin could, by imputation, or in any other proper sense, descend to his posterity, so as to render them, in any sense, chargeable with it? As far as any thing is incumbent on us, by way of argument, we do not hesitate to say No! and shall rest on this ground until the positive of the question be proved. However, although it seems very unreasonable to call upon any one to prove a negative, yet, having the evidence immediately at command, in this case, we do not hesitate much to attempt to show that the contrary is true. "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on

edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die. *The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father*, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." (Ezek. xviii. 2, 3, 4, 20.) This is proof in point, and as direct as words can possibly express. Now, if the son does not, and *shall not*, bear the iniquity of the father, how can, or how *could*, the iniquity of Adam descend to his posterity? The idea is as unreasonable as it is unscriptural. If we are in any sense guilty or accountable for Adam's transgression, why not, in like manner, accountable for the sin of all our ancestors, from Adam down to our own parents? and so we come into the world loaded with sin and guilt, of which, however, we are totally ignorant and unconscious? O what work *orthodoxy* has made of common sense!

But supposing all mankind are corrupted, contaminated, or polluted by Adam's sin, and they are now born into the world in this degraded or degenerated state; this must be considered our misfortune, and not our fault. For if Adam could not be blamed for his original state, we can no more be blamed for our original state than he; and the first state of which we have any knowledge is as much our original state, as the first state of which Adam had any knowledge was his original state. Whatever we may suppose the state of man either is, or was, before he had any consciousness of it, or of which he has now no recollection, it is nothing to him; neither is he in any sense accountable for it. If he is born into the world ever so rich, it is no thanks to him; if he is ever so poor, it is not his fault. If he is well made and endowed with good sense, he is indebted to the Giver of every good gift for the favour; if he is ever so ugly or deformed, and deprived of almost every sense, he cannot help it. And so it is with every gift or every privation of na-

ture. Every human being can say, with equal propriety, *by the grace of God I am what I am;* and this is as true in *nature*, i. e. originally or constitutionally, as it is in *grace;* i. e. by any special gifts bestowed on man after his having come to the years of understanding. "Who maketh us to differ? and what have we that we have not received? and if we have received it, why should we boast as though we had not received it?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.)

From these considerations, I conclude that man is born into the world totally destitute of a moral or religious character, as *pure*, in every moral or religious sense, as a clean piece of white paper; without a single impression, but capable of receiving many; and also susceptible of blots and stains. This brings me to consider,

3. Of the natural and moral faculties of man.

It is by no means my intention to go into a metaphysical discussion of this subject, as that would be very foreign from our present purpose, but only to offer some general remarks.

Every one will perceive, at once, that the natural faculties or senses of man are all limited. The senses of hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting, and smelling, however free to act, are all limited within a certain sphere. Sound, which does not come in contact with the organ of hearing, can no more be heard by us, than by persons totally deaf. So with the organ of sight; we see only those objects which we term *in sight;* and these remarks will apply to every other natural sense. These propositions are all self-evident; and therefore require no proof.

Now if we consider the moral faculties of man, however free we may suppose them to be, they are no more free than the natural faculties, and are as much limited.

The faculties of loving or hating, believing or disbelieving, choosing or refusing, however free, are all limited (i. e. in finite beings) by the very nature of things. We have no more power to love that which does not appear to us lovely, than we have to hear that which is not within hearing, or to see that which is out of sight. Just

so with believing or disbelieving, choosing or refusing. We can no more believe without evidence, or disbelieve when the evidence has come to our understanding, than we can see an object which does not exist, or prevent seeing one when it passes immediately before our eyes. However free we are in all our volitions of choosing and refusing, yet we have no more power to choose a minor object in preference to a major, or refuse a major object rather than the minor, when each are left equally to our choice, than we can taste *aloes* like *honey*, or smell the most disagreeable *odour* with the same pleasure as the fragrant *rose*. I admit that the nearer objects approximate to each other in likeness or value, the difference in their choice will be proportionably less; but they must be exactly alike in order to be rendered perfectly indifferent. And as long as there is a choice, although it may take but little to alter it, yet, without that *little*, the choice is as certain to be followed as though the difference were ever so great. For if the difference were ever so great, the choice could be no more than *certain* to be followed; and if it be ever so little, it will be *certainly* followed, unless something be flung in to turn the scale; in which case it would not be followed, though the difference should have been ever so great.

These observations show that our actions are as much limited in a moral sense as they are in a natural; and if limited in themselves, they must be limited in their consequences, so far as they depend at all on us as their natural or moral causes.

Of these facts there could not remain even the shadow of a doubt, were there no scripture to support them; and especially, there being no scripture against them; but I shall be able to show that this doctrine is as scriptural as it is reasonable. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. x. 23.) "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps." (Prov. xvi. 9.)

Now we know that, in a certain limited sense, a man does direct his steps; and he can be said to do this with as much propriety as he can be said to do any thing, or

that he is a moral accountable being. But yet there must be a sense in which he does not direct his steps, and this is the only sense in which the above passages can be considered true. Now in what sense can this be? Unless it be in relation to those consequences which are entirely hidden from man, and therefore he has no design about them, I am unable to tell in what sense it can be. The Lord so directed the *steps* of Joseph's brethren, that by their means Joseph became lord of Egypt, whereby much people were kept alive. This was what those wicked brethren by no means *devised*. Thus their wicked hearts devised their way, but the Lord directed their steps.

From the above, it will be seen that all the moral faculties of man are as limited, in their very nature, as his natural faculties: and hence, the consequences of all our moral actions, whether in themselves good or evil, are as limited as the consequences of our natural actions, which we know, or at least have every reason to believe, are limited to time; and, so far as it respects the individual who performs them, to his own natural life. But we shall see more of this in our next discourse.

4. It is admitted that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, i. e. in the sense of scripture; yet, nevertheless, we must except him who *knew no sin*, but was *holy, harmless*, and *undefiled*. So we can truly say, in the language of the prophet, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray—and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa. liii. 6.) But if it be clearly indicated in the scriptures that there are some who have not sinned, we are under no more necessity, from the above quoted passage, of supposing that each individual of the human race has sinned, than we are of supposing, from a similar passage, that each individual of Judea and Jerusalem went out to John, *and were baptized of him in Jordan*. We have no evidence that either Enoch or Elijah ever committed sin; but the evidence is much more clear that they did not, being exempted, so far as we know to the contrary, from all the consequences of sin; even from *death*, the *wages* of sin. And it is un-

reasonable to suppose that children, (I mean infants,) although they are subject to death, ever commit sin: Christ says, "of such (i. e. while in a state of infancy) is the kingdom of heaven." He says nothing about their repentance; and it is difficult to conceive how that they are capable of repenting, or that they have any thing to repent of; yet *of such is the kingdom of heaven.*

It has been difficult for many to account for the suffering which those little innocents often endure, without admitting that, in some sense or other, they are sinners. Hence, while some have supposed them guilty of Adam's transgression, or what is commonly called original sin, (the absurdity of which has already been shown,*) others, to get rid of that absurdity, have run into another equally glaring. The idea to which I allude appears to have been borrowed from the Egyptian, Pythagorean, or Platonean philosophy, and, like many other absurd notions, has been incorporated by some into the Christian faith.

This hypothesis supposes that all mankind have existed in some prior state, of which we have now no knowledge or recollection, and in that state became transgressors, i. e. sinned; in consequence of which, this world was made, and we were sent here to inhabit mortal bodies as a punishment for the sins we, as individuals, committed in this pre-existing state. This sentiment has been stated at large in a work entitled, "*The Science of Sanctity,*" published not many years since by a learned clergyman in the state of New Hampshire, and is still held by some, as has been understood, even in this city; but it is a supposition, resting more on hypothesis than any solid argument, or evidence from the scriptures. It requires little more than barely to be stated, to be exploded by every rational being who is determined to believe nothing without first seeing sufficient evidence (either directly, or else from the analogy of things) in its favour.

The above hypothesis appears to me about as rational

* See the note to page 50.

as it would be for a parent to correct and punish his children for supposed crimes which they committed in their *infancy*, or before their *remembrance*; or, at least, of which they have no *recollection* at the time they receive the *punishment!* The children are sensible of suffering, but they know not for what! If there be any justice in such kind of punishment, I know not on what principle it rests. But as few, I apprehend, will ever undertake to defend a scheme so chimerical, I shall say no more respecting it.

To defend the propriety of suffering humanity, even where there is neither sin nor guilt in the individual who suffers, and reconcile it with the divine benevolence, even to that very individual, it is only necessary to suppose, that some good, in some way or other, though at present it may be entirely beyond the understanding of mortals to conceive how, will be the result of such suffering; or, at least, the suffering may be necessary to prepare the mind for those future joys prepared for the sufferer, and without which they could not be so fully realized. It may be asked here, what evidence have we of this? Answer: The evidence arises from the nature of God, and the analogy of things.

It is believed that God, although omnipotent, could no more make human nature, without subjecting it to all the evils naturally incident to human nature, than he could make two hills without a valley between them. If we are at liberty to suppose that natural death was included in the denunciation of God against sin, which seems to be the plain scriptural account, and which but few will attempt to deny, then the sinner's being still permitted to live, and procreate his species, notwithstanding they are all subject to death, as he was, must be considered a matter of pure *favour*; for had the sentence been executed immediately, man would have been extinct at once, and would have so remained, as he now will remain, were it not for a future resurrection. It is possible, however, after all, that the sentence of death was executed, only by withholding the *tree of life*, and not by making any change in the original constitution of

man.* For whatever we are to understand by the tree of life, it seems that man, by taking it, might have lived for ever. For the Lord said, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." (Gen. iii. 22, 23.) As the tree of life is brought in remembrance again at the close of the book of Revelation, which is to bear twelve manner of fruits, and yield her fruit every month; and whose leaves are to be for the healing of the nations, (Rev. xxii. 2.), it is reasonable to suppose that this tree, whatever is to be understood by it, will support the eternal existence of man: but, being deprived of it, in consequence of sin, he was left to languish and die. But it may be proper to remark further, that, in every sense in which death must now be considered as unavoidable by us, in no such sense is it designed as a punishment for *our* sins. It might have been considered in the nature of punishment to Adam, to know that he had been the means of introducing death into the world, by reason of sin and disobedience, but no punishment to the innocent sufferers, who did not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression. So, in like manner, the man who brings distress and misery on his family by reason of his own sin, dissipation, and wickedness, the distress and misery of his family is a punishment to *him*; but no punishment to his *family*, unless they are also partakers in his *sins*. It is a suffering to them, but a suffering not accompanied with guilt, and which may be wisely designed for their future good. In this light we ought to consider all that we endure on account of others. For I contend that nothing ever ought to be considered a punishment for sin, except that which the sinner might have avoided (speaking after the manner of men) by virtue; and all that may now be considered avoidable by pure virtue, may

* It is believed that man, in his original and present constitution, is naturally mortal.

still be considered a punishment for sin. But unavoidable evil is no punishment.

The demerits and consequences of sin will be considered in our next discourse. I shall observe here, that it has been pretty generally agreed, by most Christian divines, that sin deserved eternal death; and what has puzzled them very much is, to find out a way how God could be *just*, and yet save the sinner from this *deserved* punishment. It will be my purpose to steer clear, if possible, of all such contradictions.

Some, however, discovering the cruelty in supposing that any one, particularly infants, may be eternally miserable barely for the sin of Adam, have admitted that this infinite debt (as it is sometimes termed) to divine justice, has been cancelled by the sufferings of Jesus; and thus, man is placed in a second state of trial, which is generally termed his day of probation. Admitting this to be the case, as it respects what is called *original sin*, man is now just as well situated as Adam was, or as he could have been, if this sin had not been committed. Though, even in this case, I should prefer denying the *debt!* Because, in point of argument, if I admit that this debt was ever contracted by Adam, in such a manner that it was binding upon his posterity, I must either prove payment, and show that justice has been completely satisfied, or else acknowledge that the debt is still due. Now, how is it contended that this debt has been paid? Why some say that God himself, in the character of Mediator, has completely cancelled this debt! If this were really the case, i. e. that God made satisfaction to himself, why might he not as well have forgiven the debt, without any other satisfaction than that of forgiving it? Seeing a little absurdity in this mode of satisfaction, others have contended that it was a second person who made the satisfaction to the first. Then I desire to know whether there was any mercy or forgiveness in the first person? If this scheme of satisfaction represents our heavenly Father as possessing one spark of love, mercy, or tenderness, for his offending offspring, it is entirely out of my sight. A man has ten sons. Nine of them

have disobeyed him; and he is determined to punish them unmercifully. The elder brother (who is perfectly innocent, and whose sensibility is so great that he can suffer as much in a few hours as all the other sons could have suffered in their whole life) feels compassion for his guilty brethren, and proposes to take their place. The father, without being moved at all to pity, at this generous offer in behalf of the guilty, and still demanding suffering as a substitute for obedience, accepts the compassionate victim, and satisfies his vindictive justice upon him! Yes, and I may say, thus wreaks his vengeance! notwithstanding he knew the innocence of the victim; notwithstanding he knew his keen sensibility; and notwithstanding he knew that the suffering, although short in duration, would be equal to the most excruciating torment of his nine guilty sons, if continued through the whole course of their lives! O, says the reader, my soul shrinks with horror from such a character! neither does it help the matter in the least to say that justice is of such a nature that the disobedient children cannot be forgiven till offended justice has received this satisfaction! Then think, kind reader, O think, my friend! how near the above character resembles the first person of a threefold Deity which is worshipped by most of the Christian world as God! If the justice of God, even "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," required the eternal death of man, as a satisfaction for the sin of Adam, and if he has obtained satisfaction for that offence, in the sufferings of his well beloved Son, on whom he has laid a punishment equal to the requirements of his justice,* does he forgive human nature this sin? Can a sin be said to be forgiven, when the uttermost farthing which justice required has been paid by suffering humanity? Suffering humanity, did I say? Yes. For none will pretend, after all that can be said about a union of the divine nature with the human in the person of Christ, that any thing more than human na-

* And if the punishment be not equal to the demand, where is the satisfaction?

ture suffered. Now sooner than admit that the debt of original sin has been cancelled in this way, I would acknowledge it still due. For in this way it exalts the character of the compassionate Son of God, only in proportion as it sinks and degrades his unforgiving and unmerciful Father! This doctrine, therefore, cannot be true; because it militates against the character of God—*God is love*—but LOVE can neither be unmerciful or unjust.

But this subject will be treated upon more largely in our fifth and sixth lectures. These hints are only flung out by the way, in order to prepare the mind a little for what must be expected in the sequel. The doctrine, that God could not consistently with his character forgive sin, until a satisfaction had been made to his divine justice by *suffering humanity*, (an expression which I use to signify all that justice required of the sinner to suffer, or all that Christ endured,) is a doctrine no where contained in the Bible; and is a doctrine as repugnant to reason and sound sense as it would have been awful in its consequences admitting this supposed satisfaction had never been obtained. Let such a doctrine be imitated, as far as it might be, by man. Let a father believe it to be wrong for him ever to forgive an offending child until he hath either punished it unmercifully, or else (what would appear to me to be much more cruel) punish an innocent victim in its room and stead! And what would soon be the state of human society?

We ought to be exceedingly cautious that we do not impute to our heavenly Father principles which we should think would be an impeachment of our own moral characters, were they to be charged upon ourselves.

God is ever represented in the scriptures of divine truth as being ready and willing to forgive sin on the repentance of the sinner. Hence he saith, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. lv. 7.) The whole of the 'h chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel is full to this

purpose, as well as many others which might be mentioned. And if sinners are accountable for their own sins, and those only, which is also shown in the chapter referred to above, then all that is necessary for any one is, to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by turning unto the Lord. "Let him that hath stolen, steal no more;" and so with every other species of vice. "Cease to do evil, and learn to do well;" which being done, the sinner becomes, what he ought to be, *holy* and *righteous*. But, it will be asked, where is the *grace* in all this? for this appears to be a salvation by works! Answer: The *grace* is in the manifestation of the goodness of God, which leadeth men to repentance and good works. (See Rom. ii. 4.)

On this ground, every sinner knows for himself what he has to repent of; it is only of those sins in which he is conscious to himself that he has violated the law of his moral nature. From these he is called upon to break off; from these, and these only, it is his duty to reform. Because every sin against God is equally a sin against the law of our moral nature, or the dictates of a good conscience; and what are not sins against the law of our moral nature, or the dictates of a good conscience, can no more be considered as sins against God, than the mere casualties incident to human nature. Hence *lust*, by which I understand all the propensities of the human heart, must *conceive*, in order to bring forth *sin*. Whenever this *cause*, therefore, is wanting, the *effect* cannot be produced. And *sin*, when it is finished, bringeth forth *death*. (James, i. 15.) The propensities of the human heart are not, in themselves, sinful, though they prompt ever so much to do evil: but when any one resolves in his own mind to indulge a propensity which is in any sense unlawful; then this propensity *conceives*, and it becomes sinful in the individual. (Mat. v. 28.) But, as yet, there is no death attached to it; why?—because the sin is not finished: but when the sinful resolution is performed, sin is finished, and *death* is the consequence. "When the commandment came sin revived, and I died." (Rom. vii. 9.) On this ground we

can account for the sin of every individual of the human race; and the consequences to us as sinners are what, if we had remained innocent and virtuous, we should have never experienced.

All that we may suffer, or be supposed to suffer, on account of the sin of others, not being produced by any sin of ours, is no punishment to us; but it is a suffering, so far as it respects us, designed by infinite wisdom, for our good; and which it is our duty not to despise, but to sustain with Christian fortitude and resignation. It may not only be designed for our good, but also for the good of others. This should make us willing to suffer, if the will of God be such, for the good of man.

The apostles considered their sufferings as filling up the measure of the sufferings of Christ; and inasmuch as they were so, for aught we can know to the contrary, there was the same merit in them. And hence, we are assured, they will meet with the same reward: "If so be that we *suffer* with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. viii. 17, 18.) All suffering, therefore, must be considered in one of these two points of light: either as the immediate and unavoidable consequences of sin, or else designed by infinite wisdom for a future good. And it is furthermore very possible that much of the sufferings of human nature ought to be considered in both these points of light. Viewed in either light, and having a just sense of the same, the mind becomes reconciled, not to the suffering itself, but to the hand of God who inflicts it.

Thus, instead of debasing man infinitely below the brutes, which is done by considering him by nature wholly destitute of every thing that is good, we consider him still, notwithstanding all his imperfections, the most noble creature of this lower creation. We consider him as still possessing the image of God in which he was created; and that man is as much made in the image of God now, as he was in the first place: for if this be not the case, why is this given as a reason that "whoso

sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man." (Gen. ix. 6.) This was spoken to Noah, after the deluge; and notwithstanding the supposed *total depravity* which man had experienced, yet this reason is urged why he should not shed the blood of his fellow man. Man, being made subject to vanity, is liable to err; yet, notwithstanding all this, man is still made in the image of God.

Whatever we may suppose that man lost in Adam, as it respects his nature, we are fully warranted in saying, that it was restored in Noah, when "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. ix. 1.); the same blessing which he pronounced upon Adam, whom he created in his own image. See chap. i. 27, 28.

We have no account that God ever cursed man in consequence of his first transgression, as has been often supposed; and even the ground, which was cursed for his sake, we have a most precious promise that it should be cursed no more; for "the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; *though* the imagination of man's heart *should be* evil from his youth." (Gen. viii. 21.) Our translators have rendered the Hebrew כי *ki*, by FOR, in order, I suppose, to favour the doctrine of *total depravity;* but I have the authority of Dr. Taylor and Dr. Clarke, both, in rendering it *though* or *although*. If this (i. e. the above) were necessarily the state of man, it would be as good a reason why man should become *extinct*, as it was why that wicked race should be *destroyed*. But the text under consideration neither affirms nor implies any such thing; but only that man is liable to become thus *evil*, and although that should be the case again, he has promised not to destroy the world again by *water*. The next trial will be by *fire;* and although some may suffer great loss, yet they themselves shall be saved, so as by fire. (1 Cor. iii. 15.)

According, therefore, to the premises here laid down, the truth and propriety of which will still more fully appear, as we proceed, *children*, while in a state of inno-

cence, in which state they must be considered till they are capable of understanding the law of God, instead of being taught that they are children of the wicked one, that God is their enemy, and that he is very angry with them, and with every body else, for a sin committed by their first parents, long before they were born, *should be taught that they are in every sense of the word the children of God; that they are heirs of his kingdom, together with his Son Jesus Christ, who came into the world to teach them the knowledge of this glorious truth, and who, while he was on earth, suffered much for them, and on account of the truth which he came to teach; that Christ loved the world of mankind, and especially children, being considered in a state of innocence; and that they should, in consequence of these great privileges, endeavour to live as he lived; he being the great pattern and example of the Christian life.* On this ground the best morality can be taught, and the best reason can be given for it. If a person's being born an heir to a crown is a good reason why he should be educated with a particular reference to his filling that important station, the reason will hold good here in a superlative sense. If a person's being absolutely destined to live in a certain country is a good reason why he should have a knowledge of that country, of its laws and government, of its manners and customs, it is on this ground we plead the necessity of every one's becoming acquainted with God, and with Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, whom to know is eternal life. Now would a person be so likely to attend to these things, if he thought there were but a bare possibility, after all, of his obtaining this object; but that the probability was against him? No! But, on the contrary, just in proportion to his doubts and fears, he would be likely to slack in his vigilance.

If his preparation were to be considered the means, and the only means, by which he was to obtain this object, there would be, I must confess, some more encouragement; but he is told that this will depend after all entirely upon the will of another, who has already determined his destination, and who, at the same time, was

governed wholly from motives within himself, which have no real connexion with any thing which the creature can do.

From these, and many other considerations which might be mentioned, I am firmly persuaded that the doctrine for which I am contending is most conducive to good morality, even if that were our only object, of any that ever was advanced. It is often objected that this doctrine ought not to be preached, even if it be true. Without taking up any time to expose the futility of this objection, (for what can men preach better than the truth?) I will only add in this place, that the strongest reason I can give why it should be preached, is, because *it is true.* If it were not *true,* notwithstanding the temporary good it might produce, yet, the very circumstance of its not being true, would be a good reason why it should not be preached. All admit that the doctrine would be good, O yes, nothing could be better, if it were only true; without ever considering that the very circumstance of its being *good,* is one great evidence of its *truth.* If it were acknowledged not to be good, it would be one great evidence in my mind that it is not true.

Now how does this statement stand when applied to a doctrine diametrically opposite to the one here contended for? In acknowledging this good, they acknowledge the one in which they believe, and which stands opposed to this, not good. Why then do they believe it *true?* If the doctrine be not good, can the author of it be *good?* and if the author be not good, can that author be LOVE? O forgive me, my religious opponents, I can assure you that I am seeking your best good, while I thus expose both you and your doctrine.

But it is time I had brought this lecture to a close. We find then the present state of man to stand thus: he is made subject to vanity, agreeably to his original constitution; he comes into the world perfectly innocent, in which state he is a fit subject for the kingdom of heaven; he is morally inclined to good, but nevertheless prone to evil; thus he stands in need of all possible instruction, of which he is capable of making a wise im-

provement. But for the want of proper instruction in the first place, or by neglecting to improve by it in the second, he is liable to pierce himself through with many sorrows. Lest, however, those evils should be productive of events incompatible with infinite wisdom and benevolence in the glorious plan of the Deity; they are all circumscribed by HIS superior wisdom, power, and goodness; the development of which will be the labours of our future lectures.

LECTURE IV.

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. EZEK. xviii. 4.

I AM this evening to speak of sin: its nature; its demerits; and its consequences.

That all mankind, generally speaking, as has been already observed, are sinners, both scripture and daily experience evince; and as sinners, it is equally true that all receive the wages of sin, which is death; *the soul that sinneth, it shall die.* All will agree, therefore, that to palliate sin, or to deny its existence, would be of no use; but would rather tend to extend its baneful influence. But while we would avoid this, on the one hand, so we should equally avoid magnifying it on the other; for this, so far from being of any use to the sinner, will only tend to drive him into despair.

The Christian clergy, for many centuries, have been generally agreed in the opinion, that sin, in its nature, is infinite, being committed against an infinite Being. On this principle, however, all proportion in the degrees of sin is destroyed; for all sin is against God, who alone is infinite; i. e. as much so as any. But it is on this ground, and this only, that any one has ever attempted to prove that the demerits of sin are infinite, or that it deserves infinite punishment. The futility of these arguments, however, I am happy in believing, begins to appear; and in proportion as the light of divine truth breaks in upon the understanding, such absurd notions will be exploded. The child of two years old, who disobeys its parent, is a transgressor, no less than the one who is much older; but who would attach equal demerit to both? yet both sin equally against the parent.

In treating of the nature of sin, I shall endeavour to

be as concise as possible; and yet be sufficiently plain, so as to be understood. "Sin," saith an inspired apostle, "is the transgression of the law." (1 John, iii. 4.) *Sin*, therefore, presupposes the existence of a *law*; and a law presupposes a *legislator* or *lawgiver*, whose intention in legislation, or giving the law, is supposed to have been *thwarted*, in order for the law to take cognizance of sin. For if the intention of the *law* (in which word I now include the lawgiver) be not *thwarted*, in what does the sin consist? What is the transgression of a law, if it be not acting contrary to the intention and design of the lawgiver or legislator? This will lead us to perceive at once, that God cannot be considered, in any direct sense, the legislator of that law which is transgressed by sin. For, to suppose which, we must suppose that his intentions, in the same direct sense, to have been thwarted; i. e. have become *abortive!* But who will undertake to say this? The moment we admit it, we admit that God himself is not infinite! which supposition involves the mind at once in such a labyrinth, as from which nothing can extricate it. For it is at once changing the glory of the infinite and unchangeable JEHOVAH into that which would be no better than an *image*, made like to corruptible man. Infinity can have no opposition. For that which is opposed is limited by that which opposes it.

Then, says the objector, there is not, neither can there be, any such thing as *sin* in the universe; as nothing can successfully oppose God.

But, stop! my dear sir, not so hasty! Would it not be more rational to say that sin is something very different from what has been generally supposed, than to say, if sin be not what has been supposed, then sin does not exist? For sin may exist, and be exceeding sinful too, and yet not be what thousands have imagined.

I shall therefore proceed directly to show what law is violated by sin; and also, who is the lawgiver or legislator of that law.

The law of a man's own understanding (which may be termed the law of God in the heart, because a man's own understanding is from God) is the law which is trans-

gressed by sin. Any other law than that which exists in the understanding of man, is a law which exists in God only, and therefore is a law which God alone can fulfil. Man is not amenable to such a law; it being above his capacity to understand. There would be more propriety in supposing children amenable, i. e. *accountable*, to the laws of the state, than to suppose finite beings amenable to that law by which God governs the universe. Now if sin cannot be proved, without admitting that *that* law which exists alone in God, and by which he governs the universe, has been *thwarted*, and in the committing of which his intentions and purposes are violated, it would be impossible to prove the existence of sin. For, on this supposition, sin can only be nominal, or ideal, but not real; as the real purposes of God are by no means frustrated by sin.

If sin, therefore, be a violation of the law of our own understanding, the next question is, who is the *lawgiver?* or who is the *legislator* of this law? Answer: The law itself being the "imperfect knowledge men have of moral good;" the legislator, or lawgiver, in all moral and accountable beings, must be a capacity to understand, connected with the causes and means of knowledge, "which standing or existing on finite and limited principles, will justify my supposition, that sin, in its nature, ought to be considered finite and limited, rather than infinite and unlimited, as has by many been supposed."*

A man's own conscience, which is the result of all the knowledge he possesses, from whatever source obtained, is the legislator of that law which is violated whenever he commits sin. Hence the apostle says, "When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law,

* See Ballou on Atonement, p. 15, 16. I would here remark, that the substance of the whole of this article, as well as much of what I shall have to say in my next lecture, is taken from that excellent and unanswerable work. And I hope that what is here stated will be an inducement to my readers to examine the work itself to which I am in a great degree indebted for these remarks.

are a law unto themselves; their *conscience* also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." (Rom. ii. 14, 15.)

The Jews, also, which had the law, must have been governed by the same general rule; because the law is taken into the account of their "means of knowledge;" (see above;) and therefore, according to the principle laid down, helps to make up their conscience. This, therefore, does not alter the general definition which we have given to the word conscience; viz. it is the result of all the knowledge which a man possesses. This knowledge, being imperfect in all imperfect beings, shows that the law itself produced by it must be imperfect; and therefore this law may be, and often is, transgressed by the very acts through which the perfect law of God is fulfilled. This fact may be beautifully and clearly illustrated by the history of Joseph; the crucifixion of Jesus; and many other memorable events on sacred record. The law of the understanding, or of the conscience, which is the law of God in the heart, is transgressed, whenever, by the influence of temptation, or from any other cause, a good understanding yields to a contrary choice. In this case, what law is it that condemns? Answer: The law of the understanding, or conscience, which was violated, and no other; for a law which is not violated cannot condemn. Thus the inspired apostle says, "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." (1 John, iii. 21.) Let a man, therefore, so conduct himself that his own heart does not condemn him, and it is altogether a mistaken notion to suppose that there is any law by which he can be justly condemned. I admit that he may still have great fear of condemnation, in consequence of his being ignorant of the law; and by supposing that a law exists which in fact does not. But only let him be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and he is at once delivered from this slavish fear.

"Our acts as moral accountable beings are all limited to the narrow circle of our understandings: therefore our goodness is limited, being of the finite nature of our

knowledge, and our sin is in the same finite and limited circle." (Ballou on Atonement, p. 22.)

Having thus far considered the nature of sin, and shown, as I humbly trust, that it is altogether finite, proceeding from finite and imperfect causes, and resting wholly on finite and imperfect principles, I might proceed to treat of its *origin*, by which its finite nature would more fully appear; but, lest I should swell this work beyond my proposed limits, I must refer the reader to the valuable work, from which I have taken the liberty to make a few extracts, on this subject; and will therefore pass immediately to consider a subject which has not been so largely treated upon in the work alluded to above; viz.

2. The demerits and consequences of sin.

Admitting the premises laid down, thus far, correct; it will be rationally concluded at once, that, as sin is finite in its nature, so, in its demerits and consequences, it must be also finite and limited. But, notwithstanding this rational and necessary conclusion, yet it may be well to offer some direct proof on the subject, by which the correctness of the whole will more fully appear.

My evidence will be derived from two sources: *first*, from the law of reason; and, *secondly*, from the law of the scriptures.

1. I would ask, is it reasonable to suppose that a Being, infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, and infinitely good, should bring a creature into existence, which, in the whole of that creature's existence, this great, wise, and good Being knew there would be more *misery* than *happiness?* so that this creature, in any period of its existence, possessing a perfect knowledge of all its consequences, (such knowledge as God possessed before creation,) could rationally prefer nonexistence to such an existence as had been given him by his Maker? This is not reasonable. And to suppose that this is the case, with any of God's creatures, reflects the greatest possible dishonour on the character of the Creator.

No finite being can merit an infinite reward, or demerit an infinite punishment. The most that he can do, in

reason, is to forfeit every blessing which has been given him by his Maker. And were our heavenly Father to take away every blessing which he has given us, he could do no more than to take away our existence. This is the utmost, then, which reason, or which that justice, which is founded in reason, can demand. This reason, and this justice, existed before the existence of man. And both reason and justice would forbid the *existence* of a creature, rather than to suffer it to exist, and then punish it *unmercifully* for any thing it should be capable of doing. To suppose, therefore, that an unmerciful punishment can be just, is repugnant to every principle of reason, humanity, or even common sense!

2. We now come to consider the direct proof from the scriptures on this subject.

And here let me premise, by saying, I shall not undertake to prove from scripture that the demerits of sin are *not* infinite; for this would be proving a negative, which I am under no obligation to do. No, I shall only examine the scriptures on this subject, which go to prove the demerits and consequences of sin, and see what *is*, as well as what is *not*, proved thereby.

I conclude that it will be a given point that God did inform man of the consequences of sin before sin was, and in fact before sin could have been, committed. "For where there is no law, there is no transgression." (Rom. iv. 15.) A rule or direction, which does not point out the consequences of disobedience, can be nothing more than *advice*, which can hardly be considered a *law*. But it is equally necessary that the penalty (whatever may be understood by that term) should be *published*, as it is that *that* penalty should have been *annexed* to the law. For the penalty is supposed to be a constituent part of the law; but a law concealed from the people would be the same to them as a law not in existence. What should we think of a legislator who should make a law, annexing a very severe penalty to the transgression of it, but should publish only a part of the penalty to the people: the people transgress, i. e. disregard the law; and on the day of trial the whole of the penalty should be in-

flicted, of which the people were totally ignorant when they transgressed the law? This, no one will say, is either just or righteous. The criminal is always supposed to understand, or at least to have it in his power to understand, the law which he has transgressed, and by which he is to be tried; and could it be known that this was not the case, it would be a good reason why he should be pardoned, and the penalty not executed upon him.

The above remarks have been made with a view to prepare the mind for the examination of that law, under which Adam stood in the garden.

Did God, or did he not, inform Adam of all the consequences of transgressing that law? And is it reasonable to suppose, or can we be justified in supposing, that God will inflict on him, or on any of his posterity, in consequence of his transgression, a punishment, of which he was not fully and explicitly informed? The above questions need no answer, i. e. from me; the truth and propriety of the subject being perfectly clear. Now attend to the words of God. "In the day that thou eatest thereof" (i. e. of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) "thou shalt surely die." Heb. "*moth tamuth*, dying thou shalt die." (Gen. ii. 17.)

These words, *thou shalt surely die*, or *dying thou shalt die*, contain all the penalty, whatever it be, annexed to the law which God gave to Adam. Now, kind reader, endeavour to stand firm on thy feet, and fortify thy mind against the force of prejudice or tradition, while I ask thee the following plain, but at the same time candid question. Is Adam here threatened with a punishment after death?—much less, is he informed that it would be impossible for him ever *to die*, in any other sense than that of continuing to commit sin, in consequence of which he should be eternally miserable? No, not a syllable of all this; yet here is the law which Adam transgressed; and, of course, the law by which he must be tried!

I am well aware that scholastic divinity has laboured hard to make out a threefold death threatened; death temporal, death spiritual, and death eternal; but as I see not even the shadow of evidence here of an eternal

death, I shall take up no time to refute the nonsense and absurdities of the schools. They have harped much on the marginal reading, *dying thou shalt die*, literally, *moth tamuth, a death thou shalt die*, and have strained every nerve to make out eternal death by it; but all to no purpose. Dr. Clarke paraphrases the words thus: "thou shalt continue in a *dying state* till thou die." "This," says he, "we find literally accomplished: every moment of his life, man may be considered as dying, till soul and body are separated." (i. e. till death.) "Other meanings," continues he, "have been given this passage, but they are in general either fanciful or incorrect."

But Adam transgressed the law which had been given him, notwithstanding the penalty or consequence annexed. And now comes his trial. God calls to him, in the cool of the day, hears the confession of his guilt, and his excuse for it. He examines the woman in like manner; and thereby traces the sin to its original source; which having done, pronounces a *curse* on the deceiver. Now hear the sentence pronounced upon the guilty pair. That of the woman I shall pass over, as no one will undertake to say there is any thing in it which has the appearance of a punishment in another state of existence. We come to the man: what does God say to him? how does he point out to him the consequence of his transgression? As much will depend on this sentence of the Almighty, I shall give it in full. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it;" (here the law and the transgression are both explicitly stated. Now hear the sentence;) "cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it (how long?) all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, (how long?) till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for (to sum up the whole in one word) dust thou art, and unto *dust* shalt thou return." (Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19.)

Now, kind reader, be candid. In all this sentence, does God give the least hint of any punishment after death? No!—he does not! Neither is it possible to suppose that Adam, or any one else, should ever have obtained this idea, either from the words of the law which had been given, or from the sentence here very explicitly stated, consequent upon transgression. Well, here is all the account we have of this transaction; which contains the law, the transgression, the trial, the confession of guilt, and the sentence pronounced, agreeably to law, by the author of the law HIMSELF, and upon those persons who first received it, and by whom it was first transgressed; and, of course, there could have been no mistake; but every thing must have been judicial and correct. If this sentence, therefore, do not contain a just and full explanation of the law which had been given, I ask, what does it contain? If God ever meant to inflict a punishment, of which this does not bear even a shadow of a shade in comparison, how can we account for his not giving the least intimation, no, not even the most distant hint, respecting it, to Adam?

Leaving this matter for the wiseacres (who are foolish enough to contend for such things) to settle among themselves, I pass to consider the next capital sin which stands on record.

Adam, being permitted to continue in life to propagate his species, (notwithstanding the *tree of life* is immediately withheld from him, for the want of which he must eventually die,) in process of time had two sons; each of whom brought an offering to the Lord. The offering of Abel was accepted, while that of Cain was rejected; in consequence of which, he was angry, and his countenance fell. Instead, however, of looking into his own heart, to find the cause of the nonacceptance of his offering, jealousy arose in his breast, and he looked with an envious eye on his brother: and it came to pass, that, while they were together in the field, "Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." (Gen. iv. 8.) Here is a murder, and that of the most atrocious kind—

a *fratricide!*—the murder of a brother!—and, as it were, in cool blood!—growing out of jealousy, as it seems, on account of religion! He had received no injury whatever from this brother, neither does it appear that his brother had despised him on account of the nonacceptance of his offering. What then was the matter? Answer: "The Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." This dispute, therefore, seems to be a kind of religious dispute; and perhaps there was about as much religion in it, on the part of *Cain*, as there has been in all, or any, of the religious disputes since that period; i. e. where *envy* has been shown on the part of the disputants.

We will now attend to the trial and conviction of this murderer! "And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother?" Cain, like most criminals, denies the charge implied in these words, and said, "I know not:" and then asks this insidious question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said, "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Cain now perceives his guilt detected. He stood before that tribunal where no witnesses were necessary; for God, who was his judge, needeth not that any should testify of man, for he knows what is in him. Here was a murder, the murderer, the law, the court, the trial, the conviction, and God himself the Judge! And if there ever were a case, which could demand the full and complete execution of the law, it seems, this is one. Now hear the sentence from the Judge of all the earth, who doeth right. "And now thou art cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand." Here is the first *curse* ever pronounced on man! and what follows shows in what this curse consisted. "When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." Now, my dear brethren, endeavour to be serious once more. Is there the least intimation in all this, that a still more awful punishment awaited

Cain in another world? No, I am happy in being able to say, there is not!

Cain, however, thought this punishment was greater than he could bear; and he immediately feared for his life. Dr. Clarke, however, observes, that, "The original words, *Gadal âvoni mineso* (here rendered, *My punishment is greater than I can bear*) may be translated, *Is my crime too great to be forgiven?* Words (says he) which we may presume he uttered on the verge of black despair." (See his note on the place.) Cain apprehended that he should lose the protection of his Maker; "and from thy face shall I be hid—and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me." But the Lord, notwithstanding the sentence which he had pronounced upon him, gave him a *token* of his favour; and said, "Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a *mark* upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."

"Dr. Shuckford" (as quoted by Dr. Clarke) "observes that the Hebrew word *oth*, which we translate *a mark*, signifies a *sign* or *token*. Thus, Gen. ix. 13. The bow was to be *leoth*, *for* a *sign* or *token* that the world should not be destroyed: therefore the words, *And the Lord set a mark upon Cain*, should be translated, *And* the Lord appointed to Cain a *token* or *sign* to convince him that no person should be permitted to slay him."

Does this look as though God was an enemy to Cain? and that he had yet in reserve, in his secret counsel, an *awful punishment* which awaited him, of which he had given him no intimation? If it does, I cannot see it. And yet, to suppose that this was the fact, and that, at the same time, Cain should have had no intimation of it, is to me unaccountable. But yet it is contended that God will finally punish all, except a few, unmercifully. O where is that adamantine heart, which can avoid bleeding with grief, when it looks into the doctrine of the schools of modern divinity? What a character is *there* given our heavenly Father! who is acknowledged by all,

(when creeds are out of the question,) to be the first, the greatest, and infinitely the best of all Beings! Should any one be disposed to speak thus evil of the *man*, who has been only an *instrument* in giving me an *earthly* existence, I would vindicate his character as long as blood should be permitted to flow in my veins: God forbid, then, that I should be silent, when the character of our Father who art in heaven is thus (that I need not say *traduced*, I will only say) *misrepresented!* I would not be understood, however, that I mean to use any weapons which are carnal: but those which are more *mighty*, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds. But, to proceed;

From this period, the world seems to have passed on upwards of two thousand years without affording any very memorable events, either for the philosopher or the historian, excepting, during this long period of prosperity, the world had become very wicked. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. vi. 5.) This passage has often been brought to prove the *total depravity* of man; and that he is now, by nature, a fallen creature. But, admitting this to be a true representation of that particular race, or generation, (though of this there may be some doubts, as this passage was only designed to give their general character, which will always admit of some laudable exceptions,) yet this is no evidence that the generations which had existed before them were of this character, or that this has ever been the character of the world, *even generally speaking*, since. But that this was the character of that wicked race, we admit. "And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created, from the face of the earth!" But does he speak of any further punishment which they should endure, or be liable to endure, after they were thus destroyed *from the face of the earth?* No—not a syllable of all this! Why then is it supposed that God meant any such thing? I have noticed every passage as I have proceeded which indicates in the least degree the judgment, wrath, or ven-

geance of God—upwards of two thousand years have expired—one race of men are to be, and, as we shall see, is destroyed—and yet, not a single word which carries the most distant indication of any punishment after death! "The *wages* of *sin* is *death*." But that the sinner should ever receive any thing more than his *wages*, is a doctrine not to be found in the Bible!

But the sentence, as repeated to Noah, runs thus: "And God said, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." Noah, however, found grace in the sight of the Lord; and having built an ark, according to his direction, for the preservation of himself and family, as well as the various species of other animals, he, with them, entered into the ark, and the flood came; by which the inhabitants of the old world, together with all other animals, were swept away. "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth—and every man."

Here is the awful fulfilment of that solemn sentence pronounced upon that wicked race! Yes, God is equally faithful in the execution of his judgments, as he is in the fulfilment of his gracious promises. And what is very worthy of our notice here, is, that, if he ever deviates from what might have been most rationally expected, according to the letter of his word, it is always in favour of *mercy*. Witness the continuance of the life of Adam after his transgression; the token of favour given to Cain; the grace found by Noah; the prolongation for fifteen years of the life of Hezekiah; God's favour to the people of Nineveh, after the preaching of Jonah; &c. &c.

But not a single instance, to my recollection, can be found in all the sacred volume, where the judgments of God have been mentioned, and of which we have had an account of their fulfilment, where the event proved to be *worse* than what, according to the previous denunciations, they had reason to expect. Witness the whole history of the house of Israel. And in those events, where God apparently changes the dispensations of his

his providence in favour of his creatures, we have every reason to believe, it is because *he delighteth in mercy.*

I come down to the days of Abraham, with whom God made an everlasting covenant, and in whom all the nations of the earth *shall be blessed.* (Gen. xviii. 18.) "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do: for I know him," &c. "And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down." —Hark!—Abraham, being alarmed for the safety of the place (for his brother's son, Lot, was there, Gen. xiv. 12.), drew near and said, "Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city—Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Yes, surely, God never does wrong. "And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare ALL the place for their sakes." Is this, kind reader, *that* God who is so incensed against his creature, man, that he cannot forgive the smallest transgression until he has received a sacrifice of a suffering tantamount to the endless misery of all human nature? O awful idea! But what is there to justify it? Nothing.—Here God proposes to spare a whole city, although confessedly wicked, for the sake of fifty righteous persons! But Abraham, knowing the wickedness of the place, begins to hesitate; he takes off five from the number, and, with the greatest humility and submission, asks whether the place must be destroyed for the lack of *five?* He receives the same gracious answer, "If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it." Abraham renews his petition, and brings the number to *forty;* and yet receives the same answer. "And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall *thirty* be found there."——The city was still safe.——He takes off ten more—and says, "If *twenty* be found there;"—and still finds the city safe.——"Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure *ten* shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for *ten's* sake."

——O, what condescension! what mercy! what compassion—What encouragement for prayer! what assurance of the loving kindness of our heavenly Father!

But, after all, that wicked city was not spared. O what a wretched place it must have been!—But, hark!—Does God say any thing about punishing them after *death?*—For this is our inquiry at present.—No—not a word of all this! But, so far from it, God hath assured us of their deliverance. "As I live, saith the Lord God, (to Israel,) Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters. Behold this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her, and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me; therefore I took them away as I saw good."——"But thou hast multiplied thine abominations more than they"—yet, nevertheless, he says—"When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters—then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them—when thy sister, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate—then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate." If the restoration of Sodom and her daughters is not here clearly and fully implied, as well as the restoration of Israel affirmed, I am utterly at a loss to know what it can mean. See Ezek. xvi. 48—55.

We shall now pass to take notice of the law which was given on mount Sinai; which, being four hundred and thirty years after the promise made to Abraham, saying, "In thee shall all nations be blessed," could not disannul that it should make the promise of none effect. (Gal. iii. 17.)

We shall not go into any particulars respecting this law, because, had it contained ever so great denunciations, we should not admit that any thing contained therein could finally militate against the promise made to Abraham; which promise, saith St. Paul, was not made unto seeds, as of many, but as of one; "*And to*

thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. iii. 16.) This law is summed up in the 26th chapter of Leviticus, where all the blessings, consequent on obedience, are particularly set down; and all the curses, in case of disobedience, are clearly denounced.

The reader is requested to turn to this chapter, and read it attentively; and also the 28th, 29th, and 30th chapters of Deuteronomy; in which he will find the sum of the whole law; i. e. all that was ever promised to man, as a reward of virtue and obedience, and all that has been denounced against him on account of disobedience and sin. And, as astonishing as it may seem, neither the blessings promised, nor the curses denounced, extend beyond this life! Rewards and punishments seem to be perfectly congenial to the present state of man; but, nevertheless, all are proportionate to his deeds; which being altogether finite and limited, being, as they are, the works of time only, so their consequences are equally finite and limited.

We have gone through with the denunciations of the law, as contained in the Old Testament, and are warranted in saying, if God ever designed to punish his creatures in another world, i. e. in another state of existence, for the sins which they commit in this, the world was kept (for aught we can find to the contrary) upwards of four thousand years totally ignorant of it.

The greatest punishment which was ever threatened the Jews as a nation is in these words. "And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.—And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' land; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them." (Lev. xxvi. 33, 39.) "And among those nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life." (Deut. xxviii. 65, 66.) All these judg-

ments have been most signally fulfilled; and are still fulfilling, in various parts of the world, at the present day. Perhaps there is no part of the world where the descendants of that ancient and once honourable race, enjoy greater privileges than in this land of civil and religious liberty.

But, says the objector, is there no proof in scripture of a punishment after death?—Perhaps so: for you will perceive, kind reader, that I have said nothing to the contrary—I am only examining the evidence as I come to it; and when I come to such proof, I shall be very ready to admit it, being fully persuaded that our heavenly Father will never punish any, but for their good. But I cannot think of any passages in the Old Testament more forcible than those I have considered; if I could, I should certainly state them. We shall therefore pass to the New Testament. I am glad to hear it, says the objector; for I am sure you will find proof enough there, not only of future punishment, but also of endless misery. Well, surely, this is a very strange thing indeed; what! does the gospel of eternal life unfold and bring to light a punishment which the law knows nothing of? and which we have not been able to find in all the Jewish records? O strange!

The apostle to the Hebrews says, "The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law;" but if it be changed after this sort, I would ask, is it changed for the better, or for the worse? The same apostle says that Christ is the mediator of a new and better covenant, being founded on better promises; because the law is to be put in the heart, &c. See Hebrews, 7th and 8th chapters. But if the new covenant expose sinners to a punishment not mentioned in the old, wherein is it better? We must look to this new covenant a little, and see what it is. For even if the new covenant promises *blessings* not mentioned in the old, i. e. *eternal* blessings, yet, if it contain *eternal curses* also, and the greater portion of the human race will finally endure those curses, in what does the better qualities of this new covenant consist?

I shall not take up every passage in the New Testament which is supposed to prove future, and, by some, eternal punishment, as this will better come under our consideration in the last lecture, but shall only mention a passage which has been considered as forcible as any; and unless the doctrine alluded to be contained in the passage I shall name, it is not at all likely it will be found in the Bible. I allude to the parable of the *sheep and goats!* for this doctrine has ever been supported, or attempted to be supported, more from parables, visions, and allusions, than from any direct testimony.

The parable to which I allude is found in the gospel of St. Matthew, 25th chapter, 31st and 46th verses, inclusive. Unless the reader has the parable perfectly in his recollection, he is requested to turn to it. The words on which future and eternal punishment has been supposed to be predicated, and by which it is thought to be proved, are these. *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels!——And these shall go away into everlasting punishment!**

In order to a clear understanding of the doctrine contained in this parable, it will be necessary to inquire, *first*, what those who are pronounced *blessed*, are blessed for? and, *secondly*, on what is this *curse* predicated?—or for what are those on the left hand *cursed?*

1. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom," &c. Why? "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink," &c. Now, kind reader, on what is this blessing predicated? Answer: On feeding the hungry, &c. Is it possible, then, that this should be the blessing of *immortality?* There is nothing said in this parable respecting the resurrection of the dead; nor of that salvation which is *not according to the works of righteousness which we have done;* but which is purely of *grace*, and that not of ourselves, but is the *gift* of God. To apply this blessing, therefore, to the immortal state of man, is evidently a

* For a full explanation and illustration of this parable, see Notes *on the* Parables, p. 153.

mistake. Our Saviour was speaking of no such subject, nor in reference to any such period; as will evidently appear by reading his whole discourse on this occasion; which commences at the 4th verse of the 24th chapter, and ends with the 25th; i. e. with this parable; and on examination it will be seen that he confines the whole to the then present generation. *This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled.* The truth of this will more fully appear, by consulting Matt. xvi. 27, 28. Mark, viii. 38. ix. 1. Luke, ix. 26, 27: where the coming of the Son of man in his glory, &c. is spoken of; and in all of the passages referred to, his coming is confined to the lifetime of some of those then present. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the awful judgments which fell on that devoted nation, the Jews, is undoubtedly (i. e. in the opinion of your humble servant) the burden of this parable, as well as of many other predictions, both in the Old and the New Testament. See Dan. xii. 1, 2, 3. John, v. 25, 28. 2 Thess. i. 6—10: all of which passages, I conceive, have reference to the same subject, and were fulfilled at the same time.

This will lead us to see what is contained in the denunciation, *Depart ye cursed*, &c. *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.* This is the language of *law:* for it is written. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10.) So it is said to those on the left hand, *Depart ye cursed!* Why? "For I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat," &c. So it must be perceived that they were cursed for the neglect of those very things, for the doing of which, those on the right hand were blessed. This judgment, therefore, is wholly predicated on the first covenant; which was a covenant of works: and according to this covenant, it is said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." It is according to this covenant, that, "every one is rewarded according to the deeds done in the body; i. e. according to their works." And according to this covenant it is, that, "whosoever doeth wrong shall re-

ceive for the wrong he hath done, and there is no respect to persons." (Col. iii. 25.) The apostle does not say, he shall be liable to receive, or he shall receive if he does not repent, but, positively and peremptorily, *he shall receive:* the soul that sinneth, *it shall die!* These *shall* go away into *everlasting punishment!*

The question now is, whether this punishment must necessarily, according to this declaration, be in another world; i. e. after death! I say *necessarily;* because, unless the words *necessarily* mean that, there is no *necessity* of giving them that construction.

It will be perceived that the whole force of this passage is predicated on the word *everlasting.* The *everlasting punishment* applies to the unbelieving Jews in particular; and to all other nations, when they hear the glorious news of the gospel, and reject it. The punishment represents their state as a nation, being broken off from the good olive tree; or to those who are still alienated from the life of God through the ignorance there is in them. Now if this state of things either has continued, or will continue sufficiently long to justify the use of the term *αἰώνιον, everlasting,* then all is rational and clear; without supposing the passage to have any reference to a supposed punishment in another world; i. e. after death.

A very scanty knowledge of the scripture use of this term will show that there is no necessity of making the common application. Because it is acknowledged by all the learned, that this word is often used in a limited sense; and in reference to things of time only.

It is used in this sense by St. Paul, in writing to Philemon, concerning his servant Onesimus, who, it seems, had absconded from his master, and whom Paul, having found, had converted to the Christian faith; and accordingly sends him home to his master. And, that he might be well received, sends by him this short epistle, which we have preserved in the New Testament: which coincident, being so circumstantial, carries with it very striking proof of the truth of the whole history of the life of this author. In this epistle, he says, v. 15th, "Perhaps, therefore, he departed for a season, that thou shouldst receive

him for ever: ἵνα αἰώνιον αὐτὸν ἀπέχῃς, where you will perceive the same word, αἰώνιον, is used. Will it be contended here that St. Paul had any reference to the eternal existence of Onesimus? I think it cannot be: nor to any period after his death. For the services of Onesimus is the subject of this letter; and Paul informs Philemon, that, if he owes him any thing, to charge it to his, i. e. Paul's, account; and that he would repay it. (v. 18, 19.)

"Words," says Dr. Clarke, "in all languages, have, in process of time, deviated from their original acceptations, and have become accommodated to particular purposes, and *limited* to particular meanings. This has happened both to the Hebrew עלם *âlâm*, and the Greek αἰών: they have been both used to express a *limited* time, but, in general, a time, the limits of which are *unknown*." The Doctor has laboured hard to prove that the unlimited is the *proper* use of these words; and that the limited is an *accommodated* one. How well he has succeeded is not material to our purpose, since the words are acknowledged to have been used in a limited sense—"hence the words, when applied to things which, from their nature, must have a *limited* duration, are properly to be understood in this sense." (See Dr. Clarke's Note on Gen. xxi. 33.)

Now, even according to this learned writer, what must I prove, in order to prove that the *punishment*, in the text under consideration, is *limited*. Why, only to show that punishment is limited in its *nature:* and then, according to this learned writer's own confession, it is limited in its *duration*.

To show this I have only to show that the punishment is designed for the good of the punished; for then the punishment is limited by the *good*, which the punishment is designed to effect: and I conclude that no argument is necessary to prove that this is the design of all good beings who punish or chastise their dependent children. Although the chastisement for the present is not joyous but grievous, nevertheless, *afterward*, it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. (See Heb. xii. 11.) Now, if chastisement were

to be continued without end, there would be no *afterward* to it; neither would it yield the fruits of righteousness to the punished. It can be only a malevolent being who can punish, but not for the good of the punished.

If, therefore, the punishment be limited at all, in any sense of the word, there is no necessity, from the word, of carrying the idea of it into a future state of existence; because it is acknowledged, on all sides of the question, that these words are applied to things which have had both their commencement and end in time. If so, why may it not be thus limited in this passage equally as well?

But I have conceded more to the learned Doctor than was necessary. I shall endeavour to show, in my last lecture, that an indefinite period, or rather a hidden unknown period of time, is the original import of these words; and that an absolute eternity is the accommodated one: which will put the labouring oar into the other hand. They must prove that punishment *is*, in its nature, *endless*, before we can concede to the doctrine.

It may be asked, after all, what then are the final consequences of sin? Answer: Death. The wages of sin is *death!* "The soul that sinneth, it shall *die!*" This is the final sentence; with which, we may connect all the miseries consequent on sin previous to the execution of this final sentence, *death*, which puts a final stop to the sinner's career. But, *he that is dead is freed from sin.* (Rom. vi. 7.) And he that is freed from sin, in my apprehension, is equally freed from its consequences. But simply receiving the wages of sin—death—and, of course, being freed from sin, would, of itself, give us no assurance of receiving also the gift of God, which is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. This, therefore, will be the subject of our next lecture.

LECTURE V.

And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Rom. v. 11.

I AM to speak this evening of salvation: to show in what it consists, and by whom effected: to refute the vulgar notion of satisfying an infinite dissatisfaction; and to explain the doctrine of reconciliation.

The text, therefore, which I have chosen, will not be considered unappropriate; especially when it is noticed that the Greek word, καταλλαγην, rendered *atonement*, in the text, should have been translated *reconciliation*, as it is in the marginal reading; and also, in 2 Cor. v. 18, 19; which see.

If this word had been correctly translated, the word *atonement*, and, of course, the doctrine of *atonement*, as it is now understood, would not have been found (as it is not contained) in the New Testament. Neither is the doctrine of atonement, i. e. in the sense of making satisfaction to divine justice, by the means of a suffering *victim*, any where to be found in the Bible. In the Old Testament, wherever we read of making *atonement*, &c. the Greek word, in the Septuagint, is ἱλαστηριον, *a propitiatory*, or *mercy-seat*. It alludes to the *lid* or *covering* of the ark, which was made of pure gold, and on and before which, the high priest used to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifices on the great day of *atonement*. This signifying, that, as the *mercy-seat* covered the ark of the covenant, so the blood of sprinkling *covered, concealed*, or *put away*, their sins, and hid them from the face of *Jehovah*.

Ἱλαστηριον comes from ἱλαομαι, or ἱλασκομαι, *to be propitious*; or, with an accusative of the thing, to make atone-

ment for. Heb. ii. 17. Εἰς τὸ ἱλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας, *to make atonement* (or reconciliation) *for the sins* of the people.

In the LXX, (i. e. *Septuagint,*) ἱλαστήριον generally answers to the Heb. כפרת, from the V. כפר, *to cover, expiate.* See Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon, under the word Ἱλαστήριον.

But, not to be too critical, we shall proceed, as has been proposed, to speak of salvation. Salvation, as revealed in the scriptures, may be considered in a twofold sense. *First,* salvation, by faith in the truth, i. e. the truth which is brought to light by the gospel of Jesus Christ: and, *secondly,* salvation, by being brought into the actual enjoyment of that *truth,* in another world, which we now only enjoy by faith. Salvation, in the first sense, is enjoyed, or may be enjoyed, by every *believer in the truth.* Salvation, in the second sense, is enjoyed, i. e. *now,* by none; except those who have entered upon a state of immortality; but will be enjoyed by ALL; i. e. when they shall enter upon this immortal state. For then will be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory." (Isa. xxv. 8. 1 Cor. xv. 54.) Thus, "we trust in the living God; who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." (1 Tim. iv. 10.)

Salvation, in the second sense, as named above, will come under our consideration in the seventh lecture; when we come to speak of the deliverance of the *creature* from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. This lecture, therefore, will only embrace salvation, in the first sense of the word; i. e. a salvation by faith in the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

This salvation implies reconciliation to God; i. e. not only a calm submission to his laws, to his government, and the dispensations of his providence, but also a hearty acquiescence in the same; believing them to be all right, just, and good. For while the mind is in a state of unreconciliation to God, it is supposed to be in a state of

opposition; and while in opposition, it is in a state of sin.

This reconciliation is produced wholly by a manifestation of the love of God to the sinner; and hence, for the reconciliation to be perfect, the manifestation must be made in such a manner, and to such a degree, as to overcome and completely destroy all opposition. This complete manifestation of the love of God to the sinner is tantamount to, and all that can be understood by, *the forgiveness of sin:* as the forgiveness of sin can by no means imply a change in the disposition of God toward the sinner. Hence the apostle says, "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John, iv. 19.) And if the manifestation of the love of God in a Redeemer, or through the ministration of his son Jesus Christ, when fully realized, and perfectly understood, be not sufficient to reconcile the sinner to God, and thereby save him from sin, I know of nothing which can save him; i. e. in the sense in which believers are specially saved, in which sense we are now speaking. "For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts, iv. 12.) Now it is very evident, that all men are not saved, in this sense of speaking; but I have reason to believe it is either owing to an ignorance of, or else a disbelief in, the truth: and not to any want of divine efficacy in the truth, were that only known and believed. But it is the believer only who is saved in this special sense. "We walk by faith and not by sight." There may be, it is true, degrees of faith, according to the strength of evidence which is made clear to the understanding; but let the evidence be ever so strong in favour of immortality and eternal life, we still walk by faith, as well as hope for things which we see not: and this will continue to be the case, as long as we continue in this state of existence.

Salvation, in the second sense of the word, will take place when this mortal puts on immortality; i. e. in the resurrection; when we shall be "children of God, being children of the resurrection." But of this I shall speak hereafter.

Thus I have endeavoured to show the nature of salvation; and also, what it is that produces it; viz. the manifestation or commendation of the love of God; which shines most perspicuously through the medium of him who is the "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

I might here expatiate largely on the love of God as manifested in Jesus; but this I must dispense with, in order to make room for arguments, which, if not more edifying, may be more necessary.

It will already have been perceived, that, if the arguments and statements laid down respecting sin have been correct, there has been no occasion for an infinite sacrifice, nor for any sacrifice, to divine justice, in order to open a way for the forgiveness of sin, and the reconciliation or salvation of the sinner. I am fully convinced that the idea of a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, or to appease almighty wrath, is a corruption of Christianity, which crept in gradually, with other gross absurdities, some of which have been already exploded; (i. e. by Christians in general, especially in this country;) but others still remain.*

Atonement, under the law, signified cleansing, or making those things pure, which, either were in reality, or else were supposed to be, impure; and thus the blood, by which the atonement was made, was applied to the vessels of the tabernacle, &c. as well as to the people. But the blood was only a type or figure; and therefore is to be understood in a figurative sense: for it contained no purifying quality in itself, but was rather considered as a *covering;* which the root of the Hebrew word signifies; (i. e. the word used for the mercy-seat, the *lid* or *covering* of the ark of the covenant, and also used for the expiation, or atonement;) viz. a *covering*, or something that *covereth.* See Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon, under the word כפר KOPHER, in general, *to cover, overspread.*

Sin was considered as defiling the man, and rendering

* See Dr. Priestley's History of the Corruptions of Christianity.

him impure. Our Saviour saith, "that which cometh out of the man, (i. e. out of the heart,) that defileth the man." (Mark, vii. 20.) Hence, man being considered in an impure state, he needs to be sanctified, i. e. purified, or cleansed, and made holy.

Agreeably to this idea, St. Paul says, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." (Eph. v. 25, 26.)

This presupposes that the church which Christ so loved, and for which he gave himself a ransom, was in an unsanctified, unholy, and impure state: yet this state of impurity did not prevent the love of Christ; he gave himself for it, notwithstanding; and that too, for the express purpose of making her pure and clean; "that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Ibid, v. 27.)

This shows the scriptural doctrine and nature of atonement. But as the word (in consequence however of an erroneous translation) is now incorporated into the gospel dispensation, and the doctrine of atonement is thought to be the real essense of the Christian religion, it becomes necessary to say something respecting it. But still we must be permitted to use the word in the sense of scripture, although that should not be altogether conformable to the creeds of men. If atonement be considered as synonymous with reconciliation, which certainly is the meaning of the Greek word καταλλαγης, and is the marginal reading of this very passage, the only one in which the word *atonement* is found in the New Testament, then the idea is not so essentially different from the atonement under the law, according to the idea which has already been given of that. For as that was to cleanse, or to make pure;* so the sinner may be considered as cleansed, or made pure, in a moral sense, when he is reconciled to

* The word *reconciliation*, (Gr. ἱλασκεσθαι,) in Heb. ii. 17. answers better to the *atonement* of the Old Testament, than the one in our text.

God. In all this, however, we see nothing of the nature of a substitute, suffering in our room and stead; nothing in the nature of a sacrifice offered up by the sinner; nothing in the nature of satisfaction to divine justice, without which God could not be just and yet forgive sin, or be the justifier of him that believeth; nothing like cancelling an awful debt, and delivering the sinner from deserved wrath and vengeance! All this, which seems to be the doctrine of the schools, is no where to be found in the scriptures of divine truth. For, although those ideas may have become familiar to the mind of many, who are in the habit of reading some particular passages with this construction, yet, as will be seen, all such constructions are rather forced, or far fetched, than otherwise.

My worthy friend, and much respected brother* in the ministry of reconciliation, in his *Treatise on Atonement*, published twelve or fourteen years ago, and which still remains not only unanswered, but, as it respects its general system, and plan of atonement, is unanswerable by scripture testimony, has completely refuted the vulgar notion of *satisfying* an *infinite dissatisfaction;* or of considering the death of Christ in any other point of view, as being a *sacrifice*, than that of its being so, in a figurative or allegorical sense; through which medium the love of God was communicated to man. I shall not, therefore, go into a laboured dissertation of a subject which has been already so fully discussed, and which remains unanswered; but choose rather to recommend that work, and bring it before the eye of the public, in this place.

Dr. Priestley, also, whose learning and piety will not be doubted by candid and liberal minded men, who are acquainted with his works, has fully refuted the notion of Christ's ever having been considered as a sacrifice, (i. e. in the sense in which he is now so considered,) either by the apostles, or by the fathers in the first age of the Christian church. See his *History of the Cor-*

* Rev. Hosea Ballou, now of Boston, Massachusetts.

ruptions of Christianity, vol. i. article *Atonement.* This work also I would earnestly recommend to the attention of my readers.

Under these considerations, I shall only speak of a few things which are the most striking to my own mind; and to which I wish particularly to call the attention of my much respected brethren in this place.

One error often leads to many. The error to which most of the absurd notions in divinity may be traced, is, as I humbly conceive, the supposition that sin is an infinite evil, which demanded infinite satisfaction to divine justice. This led the way to the supposed necessity of an infinite sacrifice: and as Christ was supposed to have been this sacrifice, this led to the supposition of his *divine nature*; which, in their train, led to other notions, inconsistent with themselves, palpably absurd, contradictory, and ridiculous! And were an enemy to the Christian religion to endeavour to bring it into disrepute, and make it an object of ridicule to the most rational and reflecting part of community, he could not do it in a more ready way, than to preach up some of the most prominent doctrines of the schools, (even of the present day,) plainly and explicitly, as the doctrines of the Bible. Some, being, as we may well suppose, aware and sensible of this, take care to say but very little about any fundamental points of doctrine: they take care to preach pretty good morality; (which, to be sure, answers a certain purpose very well;) but you may hear them month after month, and perhaps year after year, without knowing in what they really believe; or whether they absolutely believe any thing, as a subject of divine revelation. In this they are undoubtedly wise; but in what does the wisdom consist? Do they not very well know, that, if they should dwell much upon the doctrinal points, which, as may be supposed, they have pledged themselves to support, they would, in a very short time, preach away, those whom even they themselves would consider, the very best part of their hearers; and they would have none left, except a few, who would be considered by most people, if not by their teachers, to be a

set of mere selfish *bigots;* who wish the happiness of none but themselves, and those like minded; who, like the Pharisees of whom we read, can say in their hearts to all others, *stand by, come not nigh us; for we are more holy than thou!* Thank God! I am under no such obligation! I have pledged myself to no party, nor to support any particular doctrine or sentiment. I am still open to conviction; and am entirely blind to my own heart, if I am either obstinate or froward. Convince me of the truth of that, in which I do not now believe, and if it be a truth which belongs to the Christian religion, I will immediately preach it, with the same ardour, with the same fervency, and the same zeal, that I now preach what I do. I am already convinced of some errors, which I once believed, and preached, as truth; I may be, perhaps, still convinced of others; but, for the time being, I declare before HIM who knows my heart, I ever did, and feel that I ever must—come life—or come death—preach that, and that alone, which I believe to be true.

These, my asseverations, perhaps, are altogether unnecessary; neither do I mean them as a charge against ministers of other denominations; they may do the same, for aught I know, God knoweth our hearts; but these remarks are only designed to show my sense of duty and propriety on this subject. The mind of preachers never ought to be trammelled by the sect or sentiment to which they are supposed to belong; but, let them remember, that, while they are the servants of all, they are the Lord's freemen: and that they are under no obligation to bow down to the images, which the *Nebuchadnezzars* of the day may set up: but to renounce, altogether, "the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." (2 Cor. iv. 2.)

These observations, I hope, will prepare the mind, in some degree, to hear with candour, and without prejudice, what is to follow. For there is nothing which

completely unfits the mind for candid investigation, so much as a prepossession of *prejudice* against what is expected to be advanced.

Now for the sake of exposing the glaring absurdity of considering the salvation of sinners to be a salvation from infinite and deserved punishment, which the sinner justly demerited in sinning against an infinite *Jehovah*; I will admit the doctrine, for one moment, true: and then see how God is supposed to get rid of this awful demerit, so as to save even *one* sinner.

Now sin, mind ye, is infinite, deserving infinite punishment, which the justice of God requires; which demand must be satisfied before one sinner can be saved! This infinite *mountain* of sin, therefore, (if I may be allowed to make use of such a metaphor,) or rather the infinite requirement of divine justice, stands in the way of the salvation of the sinner. How, then, can the sinner be saved? Why—God has found out a way. But how? Why—to speak in plain terms, according to our metaphor, (and we must speak plain on such occasions,)—God rolled away this mountain himself; or, at least, he got it so far out of the way, that he could—some how or other, by using a great deal of precaution—get a few sinners by it, or round it—under it, or over it, into heaven! Do not grow uneasy, kind reader, it is all right, undoubtedly. But, stop! another difficulty arises. How did God move this mountain? for it was as big as himself. Is God more than infinite? No. Well then, how could infinite remove infinite? Supposing these two mountains, viz. the infinity of God, and the infinity of sin, had been put into an *infinite pair of scales!* which would have weighed down the other? Answer: Neither! But the scales would have remained just as well balanced as though there had not been the *smallest dust of the balance* in them. Thus you will perceive, if sin had been infinite, or the demerits of it infinite, God himself, being no more than infinite, could not have removed it, so as to have saved one sinner.

Again: Where was this mountain of sin removed to? I say *re-moved:* for no one, at this day, supposes that it

existed from eternity; and yet, it has grown to infinity! It is far superior to the little *stone*, of which we read, which was cut out of the mountain without hands, and became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth: for this mountain not only filled the earth, but it is supposed to have filled immensity—It is infinite! Reader, if thou hast ever been in favour of this absurd notion, and if it should still occupy the least place in thy mind, I must now pity thee; knowing that thou must begin to feel very uneasy. I will therefore pursue the metaphor no further.

But you must take care not to give up this idea too soon; lest more should go with it than, at present, you should know how to part with. For if sin be not infinite, where was the necessity of an infinite sacrifice, or of any sacrifice, to divine justice? For if sin be not infinite, an infinite Jehovah can forgive it, just when he sees fit, without the least violation of divine justice. It never was unjust for God to forgive sin. And if no such sacrifice were necessary, where was the necessity of Christ's being any thing more than what he is plainly and clearly styled in the scriptures: *Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph:* (John, i. 45:) *a man approved of God among you, by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him:* (Acts, ii. 22:) *the one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* (1 Tim. ii. 5.) For, aside from this great and infinite sacrifice, which is supposed to have been necessary, on account of the infinity of sin, there is no necessity in supposing that any thing was done, or that it was necessary any thing should have been done, more than what God could enable man to do; or, in other words, than what God could do through the instrumentality of man; viz. the *miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by* Jesus. Be not alarmed, kind reader, I have only quoted a few passages out of many which might have been quoted to the same purpose; but this will come under our next discourse. What is said here is only to prepare the way for what is to come. If thy heart be at all opposed to the words above in *italics*, it only shows that it is in opposition to the scriptures of

divine truth, rather than in opposition to your humble servant.

But, admitting that Christ was God as well as man, how was this infinite sacrifice made? Will any one admit that the divine nature suffered? This never has been, nor is it possible that it ever should be, admitted by any rational being. Then, who, or what, did suffer? Answer: *The man Christ Jesus.* And if it was the human nature only that suffered, then, after all, it was nothing more than a human suffering. These ideas must be so plain and clear to every one, that they need not be pursued any further. But—

How was even this suffering necessary to enable God to forgive sin? How was any sacrifice to divine justice necessary? May God pardon my error, if it be one, when I say there was no necessity for the suffering of Christ, as a satisfaction to divine justice. For aught I can see, or aught I have been able to learn to the contrary, God could just as consistently forgive sin before, as since; neither does he now forgive sin, on account of, or with the least reference to, the sufferings of Christ; any more than he does on account of the sufferings of the apostles, or any one else who has suffered in the same cause. "As by man came death, so by man came the resurrection of the dead." If Jesus had not died, he could not have been raised from the dead. In this sense, his death was necessary. It was also necessary that his death should have been public; so there could be no dispute about its reality. He was therefore delivered, though by a traitor, according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God: and by wicked hands he was crucified and slain, though it was what God, by his hand, and by his counsel, had determined should be done. (See Acts, ii. 23. iv. 27, 28.)

These things were all necessary in the wisdom of God; as Jesus was to set an example which had never been before set by man, and which, I have reason to fear, has been but very rarely, if ever, fully followed by any; i. e. of pure and perfect love to the chief of sinners. While we lament, therefore, the sufferings of Christ, viewed as such,

and lament that there is too much of the same spirit yet in the world, which caused those sufferings, and which has caused the suffering of many others; yet we rejoice at the exhibition of divine love which shone through his sufferings: believing, as we do, that nothing short of a perfect knowledge of the truth, for whose sake he suffered, could ever have enabled him thus to triumph in the hour of persecution and death.

The blessed Jesus, who could thus pray for his murderous enemies, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*, possessed LOVE which was stronger than death. The sufferings of Christ, therefore, hold a conspicuous place in the Christian system: but not to satisfy an infinite dissatisfaction; not to appease divine wrath; or to render God any more placable, merciful, or propitious to man. None of these things were ever necessary: and if they had been necessary, ten thousand such sacrifices, admitting the Deity unchangeable, would not have accomplished them.

Now where is there a single example, in the scriptures of divine truth, to justify this scheme?—i. e. the scheme we have been refuting? Not one. While we find abundant to the contrary.

When the man was found who had fell among thieves, in travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho, there is no account of any previous satisfaction's being made to the law against his travelling that road, or for any thing else, before the good Samaritan could pour in the oil and the wine into his wounds, and make all other necessary provisions concerning his cure. When the prodigal returned to his father's house, there is no account of any satisfaction, which was necessary first to be made to the father, on account of the loss of his services for so long a time; or that any satisfaction had been made, by the elder brother, or by any one else, on whose account he was now received. When the lost sheep was found, we have no account of any damage having been paid to the owner, on account of its having gone astray; but the owner takes it on his shoulder and goes home rejoicing. Whatever damage he had thought of before, while the

sheep was absent from the fold, and while he was in search after it, yet, having found it, he thinks no more of the damage; being fully satisfied with the *recovery* of his *property*.

The sacrifices most acceptable to God are, a contrite penitent heart, and a devotedness to his service. In this sense, the apostle exhorts his brethren, by the mercies of God, to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which was their reasonable service. (Rom. xii. 1.) And in this sense, i. e. by being devoted wholly to the service of his God and Father, Jesus Christ, through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God. (Heb. ix. 14.) And it is a knowledge of these things, and a compliance with this example, which alone can purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. In this way, and in this way only, viz. by being devoted to the service of God, can we be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. (2 Pet. iii. 14.)

But may I not be permitted to ask, without either alarming any one, or giving offence, how can the blood of Christ, in any possible supposed literal sense, either now, or at any future time, cleanse our conscience from dead works? It may do it, to be sure, in a similar sense as the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh: (Heb. ix. 13:) for this never could have been understood only in a figurative sense: and the blood of Christ, in my humble opinion, ought to be understood in a similar figurative sense. And whoever undertakes to prove from the scriptures, that Jesus was made a sacrifice for sin, in any other sense, will find, or else I am altogether mistaken, that they have undertaken a very difficult task.*

* "Because the word atonement" (says Dr. Priestley) "frequently occurs in the Old Testament, and in some cases atonements are said to have been made for sin by sacrifices, this whole business has, on this account more particularly, been thought to refer to the death of Christ, as the only atoning sacrifice. But this notion must

But, before I dismiss this article, I must take notice of another system of atonement, which has been called, for the sake of distinction, especially in Eng-

be given up, if we consider the meaning of *atonement* under the Jewish dispensation.

"From comparing all the passages in which atonement is mentioned, it is evident that it signifies the making of any thing *clean*, or *holy*, so as to be fit to be used in the service of God, or, when applied to a person, fit to come into the presence of God; God being considered as, in a peculiar manner, the king and sovereign of the Israelitish nation, and, as it were, keeping a court among them. Thus atonement was said to be made for the altar, Exod. xxix. 36, and for a *house* after having been infected with leprosy, Lev. xiv. 58. Aaron made atonement for the *Levites*, Num. viii. 12, when they were dedicated to their office and ministry, when no sin or offence is said to have been done away by it. Atonement was also made at the purification of a leper, Lev. xiv. 18. Burnt offerings that were wholly *voluntary* are said to be accepted to make atonement for the offerer, Lev. i. 3. Atonements were also appointed after involuntary uncleanness, and sins of ignorance, as well as in some cases of wilful transgression, upon repentance and restitution; but in this case it had no relation to the pardon of sin in the sight of God, but only to the decency and propriety of public worship, for which a man who had so offended was considered as disqualified. Guilt, in a moral sense, is never said to be atoned for by any sacrifice, but the contrary is strongly expressed by David and others.

"The English word *atonement* occurs but once in the New Testament, and in other places the same word in the original καταλλαγη, is rendered *reconciliation;* and this word is never used by the Seventy in any passage relating to legal atonements.

"Had the death of Christ been the proper atoning sacrifice for the sins of men, and as such, been prefigured by the atonements in the Jewish dispensation, we might have expected not only to have been expressly told so, (if not from the first, at least after the fulfilment of the prophetic type,) but also that the time, and other circumstances of the death of Christ, should have corresponded to those of the types of it. Christ being put to death at the feast of passover, might lead us to imagine that his death had some reference to that business; but if he had died as a proper *expiatory sacrifice*, it might have been expected that he would have died on the day of *expiation*, and at the time when the high priest was entering into the holy of holies. Had this been the case, I much doubt whether it would have been in the power of any *reasons*, though ever so solid, to have prevented men from considering the one as a proper type of the other. Now the want of this coincidence should lead our minds off from making such a comparison." See Hist. Corrup. vol. i. p. 192—195, Birm. edit. 1782.

land, (i. e. by its enemies,) the *Antinomian* system; but which has been, and by some still is, considered the only pure system of *Universalism;* that is to say, the only system of the gospel.

There were *Antinomians,* it is true, who were not *Universalists,* extending the system only to the *elect:* of course, it will be seen that this system differs from *Antinomianism,* in the same sense as the system of *Universalism,* by Mr. Huntington, differs from *Calvinism:* and as Mr. H. called his system *Calvinism improved;* so this system might be styled, not very improperly, *Antinomianism improved.*

This system agrees with *Calvinism,* as well as with many others, in admitting the infinity of sin, or the demerits of sin, and also in the *vicarious* sufferings of Christ, as a sacrifice for sin, &c. and pleads for the salvation of the *church,* which, according to the original system, is only an *elected number,* but, according to the improved system, which is now best known by the *Rellyan* system, is the whole human family, (all being considered as elected and chosen in Christ,) on the principle that Christ, our *vicar,* has fully discharged and cancelled the debt due to divine justice, by his *vicarious* sufferings and all *atoning* death.

This system agrees also with *Sabellianism,* in supposing that Christ had no human soul, but that, instead thereof, the eternal God—the great JEHOVAH—animated his body, so that in reality (as it respects his being) he was very God, as well as the *Head* of every man.

But—here is the *summum bonum* of the system—in Christ, God was so united to the human nature, that all their acts became his; in a direct and proper sense, so as to render him answerable for them all; and all his acts became theirs, in equally a full and perfect sense. So, he becoming liable for the sins of the whole world, suffered the full demands of the law, not as an innocent person for the guilty, but as *being the guilty,* in virtue of the *union* which subsisted between him and the members of his mystical body, *human nature;* while, at the same

time, and in virtue of the same *union*, human nature, i. e. all mankind, in him, did actually fulfil the law in all its parts, did die in him, did rise with him, and are now quickened by him; and therefore, in the eyes of the law and justice, are, by virtue of this *union*, both just and holy.

This system has all the difficulties of *Calvinism*, in making out the great sacrifice. For, turn it, and twist it, ever so many ways, one of two things must follow: viz. either that God did actually *suffer* and *die*; or else, that Christ did neither *suffer*, nor *die!* and without which, in what did the sacrifice consist? It may be contended, that the soul of man does not *die*, but that it is only separated from the body; but, admitting this to be true, (which, however, by the way, is not admitted,) it does not help the matter in the least: for it is the soul that *feels the pangs* of death; which is all that is generally meant by dying; and if there were no soul, there could be no *pang!* It is the soul that *feels*; it is the soul that *suffers:* now, if Jesus had no soul except *Almighty God*—either *God suffered;* or else, there was *no suffering* at all!

But this difficulty is not peculiar to this system. We meet with the same difficulty in supposing that Jesus had a human soul, like other men, if we suppose that something more was necessary to constitute him the Christ. For the moment that we admit that something essential to the Deity was equally, and in the same direct sense, essential to Christ, and was that which constituted him Christ, and without which he would not have been Christ, that moment we must admit that something essential to the Deity suffered, and, of course, *died*, in the sense that Christ died; or else, we must admit that Christ did neither *suffer*, nor *die*, in any sense!———

But, after all—aside from its falsity—the immoral tendency of this system is my greatest objection to it. And here, perhaps, I shall draw conclusions, or make inferences, which the abettors of this system would not admit; but they are conclusions which appear to me to

just, and evidently grow out of the system, and, ·refore, it may have appeared so to others.

This system not only admits, but contends, that the l demerit of all sin that ever was, or ever will be nmitted, was cancelled, and the infinite debt of the ıole human nature fully discharged, almost two thouıd years ago, on *Mount Calvary!* Now, admitting s true, what is the necessary conclusion? Why, that the guilt arising from sin now, all the compunction conscience which sinners now feel, all shame, all reırse, &c. arise wholly from the ignorance of the sinr!—that there is no just occasion for all this, the law s had its full demand, the debt is completely cancelled, ·ine justice fully satisfied, not only for the sins which ve been in the world, but also, for all which mankind her are, or ever shall be, capable of committing! O, r friends! If this be *Universalism*, I do not wonder at that it has not spread more rapidly. I do not wonr that there are many who believe the doctrine in the ıin, yet, seeing it predicated upon such principles, d, perhaps, not being able to defend it upon better ınciples, do not avow it publicly. I fully believe there e thousands kept back upon this very ground; who nnot believe in the doctrine of *endless misery*, and who ɔuld rejoice to espouse the cause of *universal benevoıce*, if they could only see the doctrine placed upon at rational, clear, and scriptural ground, in which the liever would be happy in acknowledging, and which, the same time, could be no excuse for sin. It is the ımoral tendency, or the supposed immoral tendency, of e doctrine, that has kept back so many good men from ·owing it openly. And I am very sorry to say, that, my humble opinion, there has been too much to jusy this precaution. Let any one preach up fully and ɜarly what appears to me to be the necessary result of e system under consideration, and I believe he would ı considered, by all good men, to be either a *maniac*, ıd worthy of commiseration as such, or else, a public sturber of the peace, and therefore liable to prosecu-

tion! Not, however, for his faith; but for disturbing the public peace!*

We have reason to be thankful, that, the daily expe-

* "The *Union* of *Christ* and his *Church*," says Mr. *Relly*, "appears to me a truth of such importance, that I can see no consistency in the doctrine of salvation by *Jesus*, without it." And in a note under this article, he further says, "The method of grace and salvation, according to union, is not at all contradictory to the sovereignty of God:——But when sovereignty is introduced from first to last, to the utter exclusion of equity, which is often done, (as a palliative for man's ignorance in divine things,) the consequences attending are dangerous. First, as it depreciates the sacrifice of *Christ*, and makes his death unnecessary: since *absoluteness* might have remitted the offence without shedding of blood. Or if it is hinted, that the condition *took place* and was *accepted* from mere sovereign pleasure only: then, of consequence, it was not proportionable, as an atonement unto the offence; and its dignity as the blood of God denied! Nor (upon such a supposition) was it necessary that our Saviour should be more than man."

Here, it will be seen, that this author admits the infinity of the demerits of sin, which alone made this awful *sacrifice* necessary: and this scheme was invented to get rid of the horrid idea of causing the *innocent* to suffer a *punishment* in the room and stead of the *guilty!* By means of this *union*, *Christ*, who is supposed to be God himself, (united to human nature in such a manner to be in equity chargeable with all their faults,) is supposed to be the *guilty!!!* (See *Relley's Union*, page 42.)

"*And its dignity as the blood of God.*" This is founded on a very doubtful, and probably spurious, word, in a passage in Acts, xx. 28. "To feed the church of *God*, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Griesbach has it, "Feed the church, τȣ κυριȣ, *of the Lord*:" which is "supported by all the most ancient and valuable MSS." (See Improved Version, and Griesbach.)

"Besides," (continues Mr. R. p. 48,) "I know not of any human laws, which admit of suretyship in *capital* offences; and sin is not only a *debt*, for which suretyship is sometimes admitted, but a *transgression*, a *crime*, capital in the highest sense, only atoned for by the shedding of blood; by the *death*, yea, by the *eternal death*, of the sinner; which justice must inflict, before it can be properly satisfied; nor can it possibly admit of a surety here; because it can only punish him, whom it first finds guilty; and that—according to divine equity; which can only declare such guilty, on whom the fault is found, and can only find the fault on such who have committed it." If this does not involve God Almighty in all the sin and guilt of the world, I know of no language which could do it. It is of no use for Mr. R. to say, after what has been stated above, "*We* only committed the fault," and "upon *us* only can it be found:" for he makes the *Union* such, that it might be said, with the same propriety of

rience of each individual of the human race, (whether believer or unbeliever,) of every system or scheme of religion, witnesses to the contrary of what is maintained

language, HE only committed the fault, and upon HIM only can it be found; which, in my humble opinion, would be blasphemous? For what does he say above? "It (i. e. *justice*) can only punish him whom it *first* finds guilty." Yet, on p. 140, he says, "the toil and torment were wholly his."—Who, then, was guilty? But, again: How is this atonement, which implied "the death, the *eternal death*, of the sinner," effected? Answer: By the death of Christ. But was his death eternal? O no! Ah! here, again, we are brought up! If it be contended, that his death would have been eternal, had not God raised him from the dead; it is equally true respecting each individual of the human race. And the same power which raised him, can raise all, (and that too, without this supposed *union*,) as well as it raised him:—Or, if, "as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will;" (having power over all flesh: See John, v. 21. xvii. 2:) then, after all, it may still depend on the Son of God whether the dead shall be raised or not. But, believing that the Father sent his Son into the world, not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him; that Jesus hath no will to act contrary to the will of his Father; and that he will perform the work which he came to do; we resolve the final issue of these great events into the will of God: and there we are willing to leave them.

That the whole object of the scheme of salvation by Mr. R. was to deliver man from the supposed guilt of Adam's sin, (which is the only sin on which this unmerciful punishment is supposed to have been predicated,) appears obvious throughout his book; particularly p. 64—67, inclusive.* These are his words: "As all died, and were lost in *Adam*, when *he* was caught in toils of sin and death, it is evident *they* were then in *him*, then *united* to *him*, so that *his* sin was *their* sin; *his* death, *their* death. As in *Adam*, so in *Christ*, *united* in *him*, in all he did and suffered; saved in *him*, crucified with *him*, risen with *him*, ascended and seated with *him*, in heavenly places," &c. Now all this, as figurative language, is beautiful; and I have no objection to it: but when we take the *figure* for the *substance*, it makes complete *confusion*; and makes both the condemnation and salvation to be a mere *nominal* or *ideal* thing.

See again, on p. 140: "We were altogether in a state of *passivity*, whilst the *toil*, and *torment*, was wholly his." Connect with this what we find on p. 48: "Justice—can only punish *him*, whom it first finds guilty." Yet the *toil*, and *torment*, was wholly *his!* Was not the *guilt*, then, according to these premises, wholly HIS?

Again: If *He*, being God, could not suffer; and *we*, human nature, the church, his *bride*, being his body, did not suffer; was not the suffering, after all, merely *ideal?* Such absurdities only need to be

* I make use of the New York edition, printed, 1812.

by the system under consideration; and therefore the evils resulting from it cannot be very extensive.

It is but little consequence to tell the sinner who has brought misery and distress upon himself, and, perhaps, upon his family, by his sinful and foolish practices, *O, never mind it! your sins are all cancelled! Christ has paid the debt for you!*—when he knows, yes, absolutely knows, let that be true or false, it does not help him *now* in the least. He knows that he has got to endure all the baneful consequences of his sin and folly, *in this life*, notwithstanding all that Christ has either done or suffered: then why must he not in the *world to come?* If we are not saved from the immediate consequences of sin; if all these things take place since the death of Christ, for aught we can see, just in the same manner as they did before, why should we expect to be saved from any consequences, in this way? I know of no such salvation: and therefore cannot preach such a salvation to mankind. Save a sinner from sin; i. e. from committing sin; and you save him from all the consequences, of all the sin, which he otherwise would have committed, had he not been thus saved. But I know of no salvation which will save the sinner from all, or any of the consequences, of all, or of any of the sins, which he either has committed, or shall commit. I believe it to be as impossible, in the very nature of things, for God to save a sinner from the consequences of sin, when once committed, as it would be for him to make two hills without a valley between. I admit, God can take away the hills, or he can fill up the valley; but as long as the hills remain, the valley will remain also. This brings me to the last thing proposed in this lecture; viz.

To explain the doctrine of reconciliation.

I have already stated that *atonement* and *reconcilia-*

stated in their true light, to be rejected by every rational mind. It is believed, that this whole scheme is founded on false premises; which, being proved, makes out, what is admitted by this author, viz. "There was no necessity that our Saviour (meaning Christ Jesus) should be more than man." (See *Relly's Union*, p. 42, note.)

tion are synonymous; yea, they are one and the same thing, in the New Testament. This will lead to an easy explanation of the subject.

Reconciliation, or satisfaction, presupposes the existence of unreconciliation, or dissatisfaction. And it is obvious that the reconciliation or satisfaction must take place, where the unreconciliation or dissatisfaction previously existed.

The subject, therefore, supposes two parties; yea, we may admit the third, as *mediator*, or *medium*, through which the reconciliation is made.

For the sake of distinction, therefore, and to make the matter perfectly plain, I shall call these parties the *Major*, the *Minor*, and the *Medium*, or *Mediator*.

By these parties I mean to represent *God*, human nature, i. e. *man*, and the *mediator* between *God* and *men*.

There is an unreconciliation existing between the two first of these parties: and it is the object to produce a reconciliation between them. Now the first thing to be done is, to find out where the unreconciliation exists. This is as necessary as it is for a good physician to find out the disease of his patient, before he attempts a cure.

Unreconciliation always presupposes some fault, some blame, either in one or both of the parties: and the parties always stand, as they must in this case, in one of the three following predicaments: viz.

Either the blame is wholly in the *major*, and none in the *minor;* or wholly in the *minor*, and none in the *major:* or else, it lies in the *major* and *minor* both. It is impossible to conceive of a fourth predicament. Now, as it respects the unreconciliation between *God* and *man*, where is the blame?—where is the dissatisfaction? Is it in God? or is it in man? or is it in both? No one will admit, for a moment, that there can be any *blame* in the Deity! But yet it may be supposed that God is dissatisfied with, and unreconciled to, *man*, because man is a sinner. But is man a greater sinner now, than what God knew he would be, when he made him?—and if not —admitting that he is dissatisfied with him *now*, on that account, was he not just as much dissatisfied with him

then, on the same account?—and whenever the satisfaction takes place, admitting it ever should, will there be no *change* in the Deity? O, in what a labyrinth it involves us, the moment we admit even the possibility of there being any dissatisfaction, any unreconciliation, in the mind of God! If God ever were dissatisfied with any of the works of his hands, he is dissatisfied still, and will be to all eternity! i. e. unless he should cease to be what he is, the *Being who changeth not.* We must take care, or we shall be brought up against that *mountain* again, which infinity itself could not remove!

Now all this difficulty is removed at once, by supposing that *man*, and man *only*, is the dissatisfied and unreconciled party. Then let man be reconciled; and all is as it should be. And the knowledge of that glorious truth, which produces this reconciliation, is communicated from God, the father of light, with whom there is no variableness or shadow of turning, through Jesus Christ, the *Mediator*, or *medium*, between God and man.

This, therefore, is what the apostle means, when he says, we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *we have now received the atonement.* See the text. He does not say, that God had received a satisfaction for sin, *through our Lord Jesus Christ*, (which has ever been the doctrine of the schools,) but that *we have received it.*

Sinners are generally informed, that, while they are in a state of unreconciliation to God, they not only hate God, but they are *hated* of God. By and by, some how or other, (but no one could ever yet tell exactly how,) the sinner is supposed to meet with a change; and now he is supposed to love God: and God, of course, is supposed to love the sinner. Admitting all this correct, I beg to know who has met with the greatest change, *God*, or the *sinner?* The sinner, certainly, being finite, never could have hated God with any thing more than a finite hatred: but if God hated the sinner, that hatred was infinite. The sinner, although changed, yet being still finite, is not capable of loving God with any thing more than a finite love: but if God love the sinner, or

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There is an unreconciliation existing between the two first of these parties: and it is the object to produce a reconciliation between them. Now the first thing to be done is, to find out where the unreconciliation exists. This is as necessary as it is for a good physician to find out the disease of his patient, before he attempts a cure.

Unreconciliation always presupposes some fault, some blame, either in one or both of the parties: and the parties always stand, as they must in this case, in one of the three following predicaments: viz.

Either the blame is wholly in the *major*, and none in the *minor;* or wholly in the *minor*, and none in the *major:* or else, it lies in the *major* and *minor* both. It is impossible to conceive of a fourth predicament. Now, as it respects the unreconciliation between *God* and *man*, where is the blame?—where is the dissatisfaction? Is it in God? or is it in man? or is it in both? No one will admit, for a moment, that there can be any *blame* in the Deity! But yet it may be supposed that God is dissatisfied with, and unreconciled to, *man*, because man is a sinner. But is man a greater sinner now, than what God knew he would be, when he made him?—and if not —admitting that he is dissatisfied with him *now*, on that account, was he not just as much dissatisfied with him

lieve, none will deny, it is only necessary to ask, whether God has sufficient power to cause all men to love holiness, and to hate sin? Answer: Yes, most assuredly, if he have only power to reveal his own nature to the understanding of the creature; to take the veil from our hearts, and to cause us to see himself altogether lovely. In whom is that power vested? Answer: In Jesus Christ, whom the Father hath exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour; to whom he hath given to have life in himself; and hath given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as HE hath given him; in whom God was manifested; for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, &c.—that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (Acts, v. 31. John, v. 26. xvii. 2. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 2 Cor. v. 18—21.)

"When the sinner views God as an enemy, when he feels an aversion to him, and wishes to avoid his presence, it is certain that the Son hath not revealed the Father to that soul. The ideas thus entertained of God are altogether wrong, and the mind that entertains them has no just conceptions of the Almighty. But, blessed be the express image of the Invisible; he hath power to reveal the true character of the Father, to remove the veil from the heart, and to let the sunbeams of divine light gently into the understanding; then God appears altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand, while the soul in ecstasy embraces the brightness of his glory, crying, 'My Lord, and my God.'

"There is nothing in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, that can do away sin, but love; and we have reason to be eternally thankful, that love is stronger than death, that many waters cannot quench it, nor the floods drown it; that it hath power to remove all the moral maladies of mankind, to reconcile us to God, and to wash us pure, in the blood, or life, of the everlasting covenant. O love, thou great physician of souls! All souls are thy patients; prosperous be thy labours, thou bruiser of the head of carnal mind.

"The divine efficacy of this atoning grace may be communicated to the most vile and profligate person in

the world, and stop him in his full career of wickedness; it can show the sinner, in a moment, the deformity of sin, and the beauty of holiness. In other instances, the morally virtuous are led a long time in concern and great trouble, about themselves, before they find him of whom Moses and the prophets did write.

"God is not confined to character, time, or place, to work the work of atonement (or reconciliation) in the soul; he does all things well, and in the best time and manner; and Christians do very wrong, to contend about those differences which sin and deception caused in them, before they knew Christ.

"Atonement by Christ, was never intended to perform impossibilities; therefore, it was never designed to make men agree, and live in peace, while they are destitute of love one to another; but it is calculated and designed to inspire the mind with that true love which will produce peace in Jesus. As atonement [i. e. reconciliation] is a complete fulfilment of the law of the heavenly man, it causes its recipient to love God and its fellow creatures, in as great a degree as he partakes of its nature. Ask one brought out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel, how God appears to him; and he will answer, more glorious than he can describe. Ask him how he feels towards his fellow men; and he will say, even of his enemies, he wishes them no worse than to enjoy the blessings of divine favour."

But it is too often the case, that this new, this heaven born soul—born of the spirit, and partaking of the powers of the world to come—goes and joins itself, if not to the *mother*, to one of the *daughters* of *mystical Babylon;* in which case, it most assuredly loses its first love. And, having pledged itself to support a particular *creed*, can be as zealous in persecuting those who do not fall in with it, as any one.

It may be well for us all to call ourselves to a close and careful examination, whether we really possess the spirit of Christ, which is the spirit of the gospel, or not. If we say we love God; what do we love him for? If it be because we feel it a duty to love him, or because we

are afraid of his rod if we do not love him, we may rest assured, we have no real love to our Maker. Many who have possessed just such kind of love, have said, and, no doubt, thought, if they were only sure that all men would be finally saved, they would indulge themselves in all manner of sin. Such kind of lovers of God are the greatest enemies to the cause of Christ, and his religion, of any in the world.

On the other hand, if we love God, on account of the real loveliness we discover in his character; that we delight in his service, because it is our meat and drink to do his will; that our greatest enjoyment is obedience to his commands, *in keeping* of which there is *great reward;* let our denomination be what it may, we have sweet communion with God, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

"Atoning grace produces all which the Bible means by conversion, or being born of the spirit;" [i. e. which the believer experiences in this life: the resurrection produces the birth, ανωθεν, *from above*,* to a state of immortality; of which state, Christ was the first born from the dead;] "it brings the mind from under the power and constitution of the earthly Adam, to live by faith on the Son of God, and to be ruled and governed, even in this life, in a great measure, by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. It opens eternal things to our view and contemplation; it brings heaven into the soul, and clothes the man in his right mind; it inspires the soul with divine meekness and boldness, at the same time. It was this that enabled the apostles of our Lord to preach the gospel, in defiance of the rage of their enemies, and gave them immortal consolations in their sufferings for the cause of truth. It causes the Christian to love God's rational creatures, and to wish their saving knowledge of the truth: it produces good works in their purity, and all the morality worth the name is founded on it. Its divine power is stronger than any possible opposition, and the gates of hell cannot prevail

* John, iii. 3, 7, 31. Gr. ανωθεν, *from above.*

against it; it opens a door of everlasting hope, and conducts the soul, by way of the cross, to immortality and eternal life. This dispensation of atonement is manifested through Christ, for the reconciliation of all things to God, in his glorious kingdom of holiness and happiness."

Thus my worthy friend; and much more to the same purpose; but, lest I should trespass too much, I shall add no further: and with these remarks shall close this discourse.

LECTURE VI.

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time. 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

SALVATION, by whatever means effected, and through whatever medium it is communicated to man, is undoubtedly *all* of God. And although there are others who are called saviours, or a saviour, yet all these saviours are so only in a subordinate sense. God saith to Israel, "I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." (Isa. xliii. 3. lx. 16.) "I, even I, am the Lord: and besides me there is no Saviour." (ch. xliii. 11.) Yet, nevertheless, it is said, "The Lord gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians:" (2 Kings, xiii. 5:) "and, according to thy tender mercies, thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies." (Neh. ix. 27.) Now although they were thus saved only in a temporal sense, yet, was this salvation any less of God, because God gave them *saviours who saved them?* Certainly not. God only was their Saviour, and besides him there was no Saviour, even in this sense of speaking. And any other created being, whom God has raised up to be a Prince and a Saviour, is as much a creature of God, and is as dependent on God, as we are; or even the worm that grovels in the dust. The highest order of angels are as much dependent on God as the lowest reptiles: and the being who made them, if he be a created being, is as much dependent on God as they are. Hence, to acknowledge any such being a *Saviour*, except it be in a subordinate sense, would, in my humble opinion, be giving that to a *creature*, which is due

alone to the *Creator*. I wish, therefore, to have it distinctly and explicitly understood, that I acknowledge none to be the Saviour of the world, in the strict and highest sense of the word, except that GOD who "made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:" (Acts, iv. 24:) whom I believe to be the "only wise God our Saviour;" (Jude, 25;) and "who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. ii. 4.)

Of this Being, and this only, I conceive St. Paul speaks, when he says, as in the text, "there is one God." And of this Being, and of this only, the prophet speaks, when he says, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid." (Isa. xii. 2.) And this salvation is no less valuable, neither ought it to be less appreciated, in consequence of its having been communicated *through the medium of*, or wrought out and effected by, *Jesus Christ:* and when I say Jesus Christ, I would have it explicitly understood, that I mean the *mediator* between God and men, the *man Christ Jesus*.

That there is one God, and that one the only living and true God, is a truth acknowledged by all professed Christians, and denied by none. However Christians may dispute about the mode of existence of this great and almighty Being, yet, when it is reduced to this single proposition, all are agreed. Therefore all the disputes on this subject appear to me to be about that which no one can either comprehend or understand. That God exists, all believe; and (except the *fool*, who has said in his heart "*there is no God*") no one denies: but *how* he exists, is knowledge which is too high for man. Having therefore already discussed this part of our subject, in the second lecture, we shall here dismiss it, by barely observing, that St. Paul distinguishes this *one God*, from the one mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus.

It is the design, therefore, this evening to speak of this Mediator; and endeavour to lay before you, in a plain and concise manner, the facts on this great and important subject.

Let it be premised, however, that, respecting a subject of such importance, which agitated, divided, and subdivided the Christian world for two or three centuries after the apostolic age, and which has been a subject of much inquiry and great controversy during the last century, and which still remains unsettled; it cannot be expected that every mind will be at once satisfied. No. This is what I do not expect. If I can only convince my much respected hearers, and others into whose hands these lectures may fall, and who may take the trouble to read them, that my own conclusions on this, as on all other subjects, are the result of much study, as well as candid and impartial investigation; and that there is a possibility at least of their being correct; this is about as much as I expect, and with this, at present, I shall be satisfied.

The opinions on this subject, which have come down to us,* are the following, viz.

1. That the man Christ Jesus was, in every proper sense of the word, a *man*; but endowed with the power of working miracles, like Moses, Elijah, and some others; and was the true Messiah, of whom Moses in the law, and prophets, did write. (John, i. 45.)

2. That he was the beginning of the creation of God, i. e. the first being whom God created, and that the world and all other beings were created by him; that he condescended to be born of the virgin Mary, and to suffer and die for the redemption of man.

3. That he was, and is, absolutely and essentially God, the creator of the world, but only in a different office and character, who clothed himself with human nature, and in this humbled state was called the Son of God.

4. That he is the second person of a glorious Trinity, which Trinity (consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) is God. Hence he is styled *God the Son*, and

* The ideas of the Gnostics, and some others, which long since have been exploded, as altogether visionary, I think it not expedient to mention here.

considered co-equal, co-essential, and co-eternal with the Father. That he took on him human nature, &c.

5. That he is absolutely and essentially God, in one person, and in that person there is a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that Jesus Christ IS HE.

This last article is what I did not know was in existence, till I came to this city; but is what I discovered in the New Church, as it is called, otherwise, *New Jerusalem Church*, and which I have stated according to the best of my recollection, adding only the words, *absolutely and essentially*, which I have supposed to be implied. The creed, which I saw and heard, (as there was a person baptized during my presence,) I think is literally this: "You believe in one God, in one Person, and in that Person there is a Trinity, consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and that Jesus Christ is He." This appearing to me to be the *quintessence* of absurdity and contradiction, I shall pass it without further remark.

The fourth scheme is what I can neither understand nor comprehend; but it really appears to me to possess all the inconsistency and absurdity of the fifth, only, perhaps, not placed in quite so glaring terms.

This idea seems to have been predicated on the words of our Saviour; and therefore is asserted with great assurance: but which words, when duly considered, it will be perceived, by no means prove what has been supposed. The words are these: "I and my Father are one." (John, x. 30.) But to understand this oneness which subsists between "the man Christ Jesus" and his Father, we have only to compare the above passage with what he says on another occasion. In speaking to his disciples, he says, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very work's sake." (ch. xiv. 10, 11.) Compare the above with what follows: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide

in me—he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (ch. xv. 4, 5, and on.) "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing.—Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." (ch. xvi. 23.) "Neither pray I for these (the disciples) alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be *one*; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be *one* in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be *one even as we are one*; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in *one*; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me." (ch. xvii. 20—23.) After reading and comparing the above testimony, can there be a doubt remaining on the mind concerning the *oneness* of which Christ spake, and for which he prayed. Only suppose the oneness to mean oneness of entity, or being, and let the prayer be fulfilled, as there can be no doubt but that it will be, and, although there might still be many *persons*, (for one being may consist of many persons, according to *orthodoxy*,) yet, there would be but *one Being!* no, not even of God, and of Christ, and of all for whom he prayed, let that be more or less! For they are all to be *one* even as God and Christ are *one!* If this be not *Deism*, I would ask, what is it?

Now all this is solved, and made perfectly plain, by looking at the text in the original. Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἓν ἐσμεν. Ego et Pater unum sumus. I and the Father are one *thing*. The numerical adjective *ἑν*, unum, being in the neuter gender, cannot, I conceive, refer to the person speaking, or the person spoken of, nor yet to both of them together; but to the *work*, or some other word understood, in which they were both engaged. For Jesus says, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John, vi. 38.) There is a passage exactly similar to the one under consideration in the writings of St. Paul. "I have planted, Apollos watered—Now he that planteth and h

that watereth, ἐν εἰσιν, unum sunt, *are one.*" (1 Cor. iii. 6, 8.) But who ever understood St. Paul to mean that he and Apollos were one and the same *being?* Yet it might be contended for with as much propriety as that Christ and the Father are the same *Being!*

Now see how this text was understood by the early Christian writers. "Most of the early Christian writers," says Dr. Priestley,* "thought the text, *I and my Father are one*, was to be understood of an unity or harmony of disposition only. Thus Tertullian† observes, that the expression is *unum, one thing*, not *one person;* and he explains it to mean *unity, likeness, conjunction*, and of the *love that the Father bore to the Son.* Origen says, let him consider that text, *all that believed were of one heart and of one soul*, and then he will understand this, *I and my Father are one.*‡ Novatian§ says, one *thing*, (*unum,*) being in the neuter gender, signifies an agreement of society, not an unity of person, and he explains it by this passage in Paul, *he that planteth and he that watereth are both one.*"

Another text, on which there has been much stress laid, and perhaps the greatest in favour of this hypothesis of any, (except the spurious text in the first epistle of John,‖) is in John, i. 1, and 14. "The word was

* History of Corruptions, Birmingham edition, 1782, p. 53.

† Ad Praxeam, cap. 22. p. 513.

‡ Contra Celsum, lib. 8. p. 386.

§ Cap. 27. p. 99.

‖ Concerning this spurious text, (1 John, v. 7.) "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one," I shall insert here a note from the Improved Version of the New Testament.

"1. This text concerning the heavenly witnesses is not contained in any Greek manuscript which was written earlier than the fifteenth century. 2. Nor in any Latin manuscript earlier than the ninth century. 3. It is not found in any of the ancient versions. 4. It is not cited by any of the Greek ecclesiastical writers, though to prove the doctrine of the Trinity they have cited the words both before and after this text. 5. It is not cited by any of the early Latin fathers, even when the subjects upon which they treat would naturally have led them to appeal to its authority. 6. It is first cited by Vigilius Tapsensis, a Latin writer of no credit, in the latter end of the fifth century, and by him it is suspected to have been forged. 7. It has

God.—And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us," &c. But as this passage favours the *Arian* hypothesis much better than this, and as I shall have occasion to say something more upon it, in the sequel of this discourse, I shall dismiss it here by barely observing that, whatever was made flesh, (which is a word here used for man, see Ps. lvi. 4, 11,) that which the *word was made*, could not have been *God;* but was that which the apostles saw with their eyes, heard with their ears, and which their hands handled. (1 John, i. 1.)

The supposition, that the *Mediator* possessed any thing essential to the Deity, as in this hypothesis; or that he was essentially God, as in the third hypothesis; or that in any other sense of the word he is God; involves us in this absurdity, viz. either that God did suffer and die, or else the Mediator, Christ Jesus, did neither suffer nor die! It also introduces confusion into the language of scripture. For when Jesus says, *My doctrine is not mine but his that sent me*, (John, vii. 16,) he must mean, according to this hypothesis, My doctrine is not the doctrine of the *essential Deity*, but is the doctrine of the *essential Deity*, who sent the *essential Deity!* Such glaring absurdities and contradiction of language only need to be stated in their true light, to be rejected by every rational mind.

The second hypothesis is what I conceive to have been the first remove from the simplicity of the gospel; and I have stated them all in the order in which I conceive

been omitted as spurious in many editions of the New Testament since the reformation:—in the two first of Erasmus, in those of Aldus, Colinæus, Zwinglius, and lately of Griesbach. 8. It was omitted by Luther in his German version. In the old English Bibles of Henry VIII. Edward VI. and Elizabeth, it was printed in small types, or included in brackets: but between the years 1566 and 1580 it began to be printed as it now stands; by whose authority, is not known. See Travis's Letters to Gibbon, and Porson's to Travis. Also Griesbach's excellent dissertation on the text, at the end of his second volume. Abp. Newcomb omits the text, and the bishop of Lincoln expresses his conviction that it is spurious. Elem. of Theol. vol. ii. p. 90, note."

them to stand, both in point of chronology and absurdity, and therefore this must be considered the least objectionable of any, save the first.

This is what is called the doctrine of *Arianism*, from *Arius*, its author, and for a little time come very near triumphing and becoming the established doctrine of the church.

"It is acknowledged," (I am now quoting from Dr. Priestley,) "that Arius, in the course of the controversy, had many abettors in Egypt, where the difference first arose; and among them were many persons distinguished by their genius and learning, as well as by their rank and station in the world.

"The emperor Constantine, having endeavoured in vain to compose these differences in the religion which he had lately professed, and especially to reconcile Arius and Alexander, at length called a general council of bishops at Nice, the first which had obtained that appellation, and in this council, after much indecent wrangling and violent debate, Arius was condemned, and banished to Illyricum, a part of the Roman empire very remote from Alexandria, where the controversy originated. But notwithstanding this condemnation, so far were the Christians of that age from having any opinion of the infallibility of councils, that the doctrine of Arius triumphed both over the decrees of this celebrated assembly, and the authority of the emperor, who was afterwards induced to think better of Arius. He therefore recalled him from banishment, and ordered Alexander his bishop to admit him to communion. But Arius died before the order could be executed.

"Constantius, the successor of Constantine, and also some others of the emperors, favoured the Arians, and in those reigns their doctrine was by far the most generally received throughout the Roman empire. The bishops of that profession held many councils, and they are acknowledged to have been very full. But at length Arianism was in a great measure banished from the Roman empire by the persecutions of the emperor Theodo-

sius, who interested himself greatly in favour of the Trinitarian doctrine.*

This doctrine, being a kind of medium between the simple humanity of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity, was embraced with avidity, and supported with zeal. And it is not at all surprising that many, in giving up the doctrine of the Trinity, fall into it. It is what I once fully believed. And, had I been more capable of acting the part of a hypocrite, I might have still acknowledged, or, at least, not denied it; for it was very mortifying to my pride, as a public teacher, to be obliged to give it up. But being convinced that it is not true, how can I quit the world, and be able to say, in the language of an apostle, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God," should I conceal my sentiments on this subject? It is admitted that this hypothesis is much more congenial to the language of Christ and his apostles, than either of the others which have been considered; but no more so than the first hypothesis. In giving my reasons, therefore, for adopting the first, it will be seen why I reject the second. For all these hypotheses are so radically different from each other, that the truth of either of them must exclude the truth of all the others.

In the first place, I wish to have it distinctly understood, that I consider Jesus of Nazareth the true Messiah; him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write; the Christ, the Son of God; and thus believing, I have an unshaken *hope*, that I shall have eternal life through his name. (See John, i. 45. Acts, iii. 22. John, xx. 31.) And believing all this, firmly and sincerely, without wavering or doubting, do I believe enough to constitute me a Christian believer, or not? Shall it be said that I am a heathen, Deist or infidel, merely because I cannot subscribe to the dogmas of human invention!—the creeds of men? Be it known to you, then, O ye sticklers for human creeds! that *God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God*,

* Hist. of Corrupt. p. 83, 84.

Trinity, Triune God, the *eternal Three,* the *human* or the *divine nature of Christ,* in contradistinction to any other nature which he possessed, together with much more which has become the doctrines of the schools, is not *Bible language!* And if not to be found in the Bible, what are all such epithets but the inventions of men? And if they are the doctrines and inventions of men, why should we, as Christians, bow down unto them? I therefore have taken the liberty to enter my solemn protest against it; believing such language to belong exclusively to the doctrine of *Antichrist,* and to no other! Whereas the doctrine which I believe, and the doctrine which I mean to preach, as long as God spares my life, I can express not only in the language, but in the very words of scripture; and in so doing, I express it more explicitly than I should in any other words that I could invent, or sentences which I could coin.

My reasons, therefore, for believing in the simple humanity of Christ, (which is only another word I use for *the man Christ Jesus,*) are the following: viz.

Jesus said to the Jews, "If ye believed in Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me." (John, v. 46.) Now by turning to the writings of Moses, I find these words: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;—and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them (the house of Israel) all that I shall command him." (Deut. xviii. 15, 18.) These words are applied to Christ by St. Peter and St. Stephen. (See Acts, iii. 22, 23. vii. 37.) Now did not Moses write truly? and was not this prophecy fulfilled in Jesus? Yes. And if so, am I not justified in saying that Jesus was this very prophet, that he was of their brethren the Jews, and, being the seed of Abraham, and the son of David, he was like unto Moses? Consider him as much more eminent in station as you please; but eminence in station never makes an unlikeness in nature. The king on the throne is of the same nature as the beggar on the dunghill. (1 Sam. ii. 8.)

Jesus is not only called a *man*, but a prophet, in many places of the gospels; and it does not appear that this language was ever offensive to any one in the days of the apostles. For every body took him to be a man during his abode on earth. And even when he performed miracles, those who saw them were not like the superstitious natives of Melita, who first took Paul for a murderer, and then for a god, (Acts, xxviii. 4, 6,) but they "glorified God who had given such power unto men." (Mat. ix. 8.)

Jesus frequently styles himself *the son of man*, as well as *the son of God*. He is also said to be *the son of David*, and *the son of Abraham*. He is called a man even after his ascension. "He (God) hath appointed a day in which he will jduge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." (Acts, xvii. 31.) See also in the text, *the man Christ Jesus*. And St. Peter says to the Jews at Jerusalem: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." (Acts, ii. 22.) Now if Jesus be a man, he must possess every thing essential to man; a human soul, as well as a human body; for what else is man? You would not say that a body, however perfect it could be made, without a soul, is man. What is it then, after all, that constituted Jesus a man? or is it true, after all that we read on this subject, that he was not a man in any sense? Only make out to your own satisfaction what it was that constituted Jesus of Nazareth *man*, and then take it for granted, if you please, that it is that certain something which I mean when I speak of the *man Christ Jesus*.

The supposition that Christ was a man, does best account, as I conceive, both for his temptation in the wilderness, and his agony in the garden. If he were the Creator of the world, even in a subordinate sense, what was there in the world which could tempt him? And ow could it then be said, with any colour of truth, that e was tempted in all points like as we are? Do we

create the things by which we are tempted? or has God created them by us? Certainly not. And it is equally certain that there is some mistake here on this subject. All things pertaining to the gospel, or the kingdom of Christ, may have been created with a special reference to him, and therefore *for* him, though he might have had no immediate agency in their existence; and admitting this to be the fact, I conceive it will sufficiently justify the language of scripture on this subject. Again, how shall we account for his agony in the garden, in view of his sufferings? If he was the Creator of the world, and of course of his own body, how is it possible that such a being could suffer? I know of no way to account for any suffering, and especially in mind, unless there were a human *soul* as well as *body*. When Jesus said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" (Mat. xxvi. 38;) what did he mean? Who was? what was? *that soul*, which was so exceeding sorrowful? Will you say that the eternal Jehovah, the Creator and Upholder of all worlds, was ever *exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?* And if not, who or what was it? Say it was the *human nature of Christ:* and in so saying, if you have any meaning, you say exactly what I mean by *the man Christ Jesus.*

"The making of the *Logos* to be the soul of Christ," says Dr. Lardner, "does really annihilate his example, and enervate all the force which it should have upon us."*

But it may be said that there are some passages which seem to indicate that Christ had a human body, but not a human soul.

John, i. 14. *And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.* Here it is evident that the word *flesh* is equivalent to *man*, as it often is both in the Old and New Testament. "I will not fear what *flesh* can do unto me." Ps. lvi. 5. Ver. 11. "I will not fear what *man* can do unto me." See also Mat. xiii. 20. Luke, iii. 6. John, xvii. 2. Acts, ii. 17. 1 Pet. i. 24. 1 John, iv. 2, 3. 2d

* Letter on the Logos, p. 8.

Ep. ver. 7. It is pretty evident that John wrote in opposition to the *Gnostics* or *Docetes*, who denied the real humanity of Christ, and said, he was a man in appearance only. See Dr. Lardner on the Logos, p. 9.

Heb. x. 5. *A body hast thou prepared me.* Here it is reasonable to suppose that a part is put for the whole. St. Paul writes to the Romans: "I beseech you, therefore, that ye present your *bodies* a living sacrifice to God." (Rom. xii. 1.) But will any one conclude from this that the Romans had not *souls* as well as *bodies?* or that their *souls* might be neglected? At the beginning of the next chapter, he says, "Let every *soul* be subject to the higher powers:" where the other part of the human nature is put for the whole.

These passages, with many others that might be named, and some of which will be named hereafter, to say the most, will barely apply to the hypothesis under consideration, admitting it could be otherwise proved; but when such testimony is brought as proof, I think we are at least *excusable* in withholding our assent.

As it respects the miraculous conception and birth of Christ, I am not disposed to object to it, but should be inclined to believe it, were the external evidence perfectly clear. It is no more miraculous than the creation of the first man, or the formation of the first woman; and it is nearly analogous to the birth of Samuel, and of Isaac; as, according to the account, there must have been a miracle in the birth of these also; especially of Isaac, as well as of Jesus. (See Rom. iv. 18—20.) And if God so distinguished the birth of Isaac, who was the heir of promise, it is not at all surprising that the birth of Jesus should be distinguished in a still more extraordinary manner.

But, after all, it must not be disguised that the external testimony in favour of this hypothesis, does not come down to us with all that strength of evidence which is attached to his public ministry. Mark and John write nothing upon the subject: neither is there the least allusion to it in all the New Testament, except the narratives in Matthew and Luke. The editors of the In-

proved Version of the New Testament have found such reasons to doubt the authenticity of these narratives, that they have printed the whole of them in *Italic*. There is also a passage in John which it is difficult to reconcile with these narratives. It is a well known fact that John wrote the last of any of the apostles. The earliest chronology (that of Dr. Lardner) states it to have been written A. D. 68: but some put it as late as A. D. 96. This writer informs us, that when Christ selected his twelve disciples, having chosen Philip, and said unto him, *Follow me*, "Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, *Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph*." (John, i. 45.) John gives us no intimation but that this language is perfectly correct; nor is there a single sentence in all his gospel that contradicts it. For although he speaks of the *Word* that was made flesh, yet there is nothing which forbids the idea of that flesh's being the son of Joseph, as well as of Mary. But, after all, the silence of John, and the other apostles, should not be taken as conclusive evidence against the fact, any more than it is against other facts not mentioned by him, but mentioned by Luke and others. Dr. Lardner, whose sentiment exactly coincides with my own, in the main point on this question, (i. e. that Jesus in every proper sense was a man,) admitted the authenticity of these narratives, and, I understand, in his memoirs, has written a defence of them, particularly that of Luke, which, however, I have never seen. I only state the facts as I find them on this subject, and my readers must judge for themselves.*

* There was nothing said on the miraculous conception in the public lecture; neither do I wish ever to make it a subject of public discussion. I choose rather to admit it than dispute it: but do not consider that the character of Christ essentially depends upon it. He never speaks of it, nor alludes to it, himself; and it is very remarkable that in all the account we have of the preaching of the apostles in the book of Acts, and in all the Epistles, there is a total silence on this subject.

As I have mentioned the doubts on this subject in the Improved Version of the New Testament, it may not be improper to state the

But, admitting the account perfectly true, it contains nothing against my hypothesis, but much in favour of it. Jesus was born like other children; received nourishment, and grew up like other men; and, more than this,

evidence on which those doubts are founded. As it respects the narrative in Matthew, it is stated, that, "Epiphanius says that Cerinthus and Carpocrates, who used the gospel of the Ebionites, which was probably the original gospel of Matthew, written in the Hebrew language for the use of Jewish believers, argued from the genealogy at the beginning of the gospel, that Christ was the son of Joseph and Mary; but that the Ebionites had taken away even the genealogy, beginning their gospel with these words: 'It came to pass in the days of Herod the king of Judea, that John came baptizing,' &c. (See Epiphanius, Hæres, 30. sect. 13. Jones on the Canon, vol. i. pt. 2. ch. 25.) The narrative (say they) could not have been written by the author of the genealogy, for it contradicts his design, which was to prove that Jesus, being the son of Joseph, was the descendant of Abraham and David; whereas the design of this narrative is to show that Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, was not his real father. This account, therefore, of the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ, must have been wanting in the copies of Cerinthus and Carpocrates, as well as in those of the Ebionites: and if the genealogy be genuine, this narrative must be spurious. See Pope on Mir. Concept. p. 93. Lardner's Works, vol. i. p. 432. If this account be true, the proper name of Jesus, according to the uniform custom of the Jews, would have been Jesus of Bethlehem, not Jesus of Nazareth." See upon this subject, Dr. Priestley's History of Early Opinions, vol. 4. b. iii. c. 20; Dr. Williams's Free Enquiry; Mr. Emerson's Dissonance, chap. i. sect. 3. chap. iii. sect. 2; Jones's Development of Events, vol. i. p. 365, &c.; Sequel to Ecclesiastical Researches, pt. i. chap. 7, 8. See Improved Version, note on Matth. i. 1, 17, and on.

As it respects the narrative in the gospel according to Luke, it is stated, that, "though they (the verses containing the narrative) are to be found in all manuscripts and versions which are now extant, yet the following considerations have induced many to doubt whether they were really written by Luke:

"1. The evangelist expressly affirms that Jesus had entered upon, or, as Grotius understands it, had completed, his thirtieth year in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, chap. iii. 1, 23. See Grot. in loc. He must therefore have been born fifteen years before the death of Augustus, A. U. C. 752 or 753: but the latest period assigned for the death of Herod is the spring of A. U. C. 751, and he died, probably, the year before. See Dr. Lardner's Works, vol. i. p. 423—428, and Jones's Development of Facts, vol. i. p. 365—368. Herod therefore must have been dead upwards of two years before Christ was born. A fact which invalidates the whole narration, and makes it impossible (I should say improbable) that the writer of the history should have been the writer of the preliminary chapters.

"increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Luke, ii. 52.)

I shall consider here a few texts which have been supposed to speak of his pre-existence. *The form of God,* (Philip. ii. 6,) I conceive, denotes his knowledge of the hearts of men, and other miraculous powers. This sense does well accord with John, x. 34—36, which see. But though he had so great power, *he made himself of no reputation:* he submitted to the reproach of enemies, and at last to death itself. Thus, "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." (2 Cor. vii. 9.) His being before John the Baptist, I apprehend, is not to be understood in point of time, but in eminence and station. *He was before me,* (John, i. 30,) i. e. he is my chief, or prince, or principal: ὅτι πρωτος μου ἦν.

In this sense he was before *Abraham,* (John, viii. 8,) not in time, but in dignity of station. It is a way of speaking resembling that in Rev. xiii. 8; "——of the lamb, slain from the foundation of the world." See also 1 Pet. i. 20. Eph. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. Abraham rejoiced to see the day of the Messiah, and he saw

"2. The first and second chapters of this gospel were wanting in the copies used by Marcion, a reputed heretic, who flourished very early in the second century. His gospel was undoubtedly that of Luke: and he maintains its antiquity, authenticity, and integrity. Marcion was one of those, who, being ashamed of the simplicity of the gospel, blended it with the wild speculations of an erroneous philosophy. But his character was unimpeached even by his bitterest enemies, till it was calumniated by Epiphanius, 200 years after his death."

There are several other reasons given in the note, particularly the evangelist's making no allusion to these remarkable incidents in his preface to the book of Acts, (see Acts, i. 1,)—the difficulty in reconciling it with the prophecies concerning the Messiah, that he should be the offspring of David and of Abraham, (the Jews having no female genealogies,)—there being no allusion to any of these facts in either of the succeeding histories of Luke, or in any other books of the New Testament—the style of the two first chapters being different from the rest of the history—the date of the enrolment, ch. ii. 1, 2, being a great historical difficulty, &c. &c.; —but the two reasons above mentioned seem to be the most important. See Improved Version, note on Luke, i. 5, and on.

it, i. e. by faith, and was glad. Compare John, viii. 56. with Heb. xi. 13.

John, xvii. 5. *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory, which I had with thee before the world was.* "But this," says Dr. Lardner, "according to the Jewish phraseology, may be very well understood of the glory, always designed for the Christ by the immutable purpose of God."*

The glory for which Christ here prays, is the reward of his obedience, ver. 4. *I have finished the work thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me.* Compare this with Phil. ii. 9. Heb. ii. 9, 10. xii. 2. Luke, xxiv. 26. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. Acts, xxvi. 22, 23. Rom. i. 3, 4. All of which is in perfect harmony with the idea that the glory of the Messiah was subsequent to his obedience and sufferings on earth.

And Dr. Lardner further observes, that Augustin, who has largely considered the words of John, xvii. 5, and in so doing, quotes Eph. i. 4. Rom. i. 1, 4, understands them of Christ's human nature, and explains them in the same manner as above.†

It was the opinion of some of the ancient writers of the church, whose Christianity was blended with the philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato, that Christ, or the Son, appeared to the patriarchs, and was often sent upon messages to men by the Supreme Being, before the times of the gospel. But where is the proof of this? Answer: It does not exist. But the sentiment is completely overthrown by the very first words of the apostle in the epistle to the Hebrews: which see. He says God spake in former times by the *prophets;* but in these last days *has spoken unto us by his son.* See also Heb. ii. 1, 2, 3, 6.

As I am obliged to crowd much matter into this lecture, many passages are only referred to, which I wish to have particularly examined by the reader; who ought

* Let. on the Logos, p. 16. See also *Grotius* upon the place.
† August. In Joan Evang. cap. 17. Tr. cv. n. 8. ed. Bened. tom. p. 2.

not to think he has read the lecture at all, until he has examined all these passages; i. e. unless they should be already familiar to him, and perfectly in his recollection.

There are other passages which speak of Christ's being sent from God, coming from God, and returning to God, &c. all of which, it is supposed, alludes to his pre-existence. But it is also said, *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John:* (John, i. 6:) Yet none ever supposed that *John* came directly from heaven. See also John, xvii. 18. xx. 21. *As my Father has sent me, so send I you.* But, after all, *Jesus*, by way of eminence, is the *Sent of God*, as he had the highest commission ever given to man. See John, iii. 34. iv. 34. v. 23—38. x. 36.

John, xiii. 3. and xvi. 27, 28, is explained by chap. viii. 42; where it must be perceived, I think, that by Christ's coming from God, &c. his divine commission is intended.

The reproaches, contradictions, sufferings, and death of Christ, are often set before us in the scriptures; and if the *Logos*, that high and exalted spirit, in the *Arian* sense, was the soul of Christ, it is difficult to account for its not being stated more explicitly.

John, i. 1. Και θεος ην ο λογος, *And the word was God.* This passage, when considered in connexion with ver. 14. *and the word was made flesh, &c.* it is acknowledged, presents a difficulty: not a difficulty, however, which affects the main question; but only in the application of the term, λογος, *word.*

Dr. Lardner, whose work lays before me, understands the Logos, in the first verse, to refer to God the Father, the Creator of all things; and, of course, the creation here spoken of, that of the material world. "I am of opinion," says he, "that *God* here is the same God that was mentioned before. St. *John* used a gradation. First he says, *the Word was* always, before all time. Then he adds: *and was with God:* and, lastly, that he *was God* himself." This is undoubtedly correct, if, by *the beginning*, we are to understand *before all time*, and by

all things were made by him, (ver. 3,) the creation of the material world.

But Dr. L. Carpenter, in a late publication, who agrees with Dr. Lardner in the main question, gives this text a different construction. He supposes that by the λογος, *Word,* which was with God, &c. and was made flesh, &c. we are to understand Christ, and none else; and that by *in the beginning,* we are to understand the commencement of the gospel dispensation.*

Who shall decide, when doctors of such eminent learning and respectability disagree?

I am inclined, however, rather to lean to the opinion of Dr. C. on this subject, as I think it best comports with the very words of this evangelist on a similar, if not the same subject. 1 John, i. 1, 2. "*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life.* (For the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.") This appears to me to be a full and complete comment on the first chapter of John's gospel. And although it refers to the life which was with the Father, and which was manifested in his son, (John, v. 26,) yet it is obvious that he speaks of the *son* which was from the *beginning,* (by

* It was my design here to have inserted a note from Dr. Carpenter; but the work alluded to being in the same predicament of that of Dr. Taylor, (see note on page 50,) it must be omitted. The following is taken from a note in the Improved Version, John, i. 3. "*All things were done by him.* 'All things were made by him.' Newcome: but this is a sense which the word εγενετο will not admit. Γινομαι occurs upwards of seven hundred times in the New Testament, but never in the sense of create. It signifies in this gospel, where it occurs fifty-three times, to be, to come, to become, to come to pass: also to be done or transacted, chap. xv. 7. xix. 36. It has the latter sense, Mat. v. 18. vi. 8. xxi. 42. xxvi. 6. All things in the Christian dispensation were done by Christ; i. e. by his authority, and according to his direction: and in the ministry committed to his apostles, nothing has been done without his warrant. See John, xv. 4, 5. 'Without me ye can do nothing.' Compare ver. 7, 10, 16; John, xvii. 8; Col. i. 16, 17. Cappe's Dissert. vol. i. p. 19—22."

which he undoubtedly means the commencement of the gospel dispensation,) and which he had *heard*, *seen*, and *handled*. These things cannot be predicated of God, who is, and probably ever will be, *invisible;* i. e. to us, and perhaps to all created beings.

But if by the Logos, in the first verse, any thing was meant which is essential to God, it could be nothing less than God himself. That God was manifested in Jesus, by his wisdom and miraculous powers, is undoubtedly a truth, whether this be the meaning of the passage under consideration or not. For Christ ever ascribed all his miracles to his Father: and in none of the gospels is this done so frequently, and so expressly, as in St. John's, ch. v. 9. *The son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do.* See also ver. 27, 30—32, 36, 37. ch. viii. 18, 28, 38, 42, 54. x. 29, 30, 35. All these passages would read perfectly clear to us, were we not blinded by the traditions and doctrines of men. But on the Trinitarian hypothesis, they are utterly unreconcilable; and on the *Arian* hypothesis, they meet with insuperable difficulties.

The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, as has been already observed, was tantamount to saying, that Jesus was a real man, and lived among us like other men, in contradistinction to the opinion of the *Gnostics*, who held that he was a man only in appearance. And with this construction, all the difficulties on this subject appear to me to be very easily reconciled.

If it be asked, on what particular account Jesus was called *the son of God?* It may be answered,

1. He may be emphatically called so, (admitting the testimony true,) on account of his miraculous conception and birth. (Luke, i. 31—35.)

2. Jesus is the son of God, on account of the special commission given him by the Father, and extraordinary qualifications bestowed upon him, in order to his fulfilling it. (Jon, x. 36. Mat. iii. 16. Mark, i. 10. Luke, iii. 21, 22. John, i. 32—34. Acts, iii. 34.) *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his root. And the spirit of the Lord*

shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel, and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. Isa. xi. 1—3. Compare Isa. xlii. 1—4. lxi. 1—3. and Mat. xii. 17. and Luke, iv. 18, 19.

3. Jesus is the son of God, and *the first born from the dead*, on account of his resurrection, on the third day, to life and immortality. Rom. i. 3, 4. Col. i. 15, 18.

4. Jesus is the son of God, on account of his exaltation to God's right hand, and being invested with authority and dominion over all flesh, and constituted judge of the world. John, iii. 35. v. 21, 22. Heb. i. 1—3. Col. iii. 5, 6.

The foregoing passages, being all carefully examined, will help us to understand the one in Heb. i. 9. *Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

Fellows signify companions or equals: but if Jesus was the second person of a glorious Trinity, who were his fellows whom he was anointed above? None but the Father and Holy Ghost could have been his fellows. And on the *Arian* hypothesis, he has no fellows; for this express reason, he has none who ever were equal in rank. But if he be a prophet like unto Moses, and of his brethren, the Jews, then Moses and the Jewish prophets were his fellows. He was anointed, however, (for *Christ* signifies *anointed*,) with the oil of gladness, above them all.

It is on the hypothesis of Jesus' being a real man, and on this only, that we can realize the force of his example. If he was a being so far above us as the Arian hypothesis supposes, how can we expect to attain to the example which he set in the world? I query whether any one with such views does expect it; and it is doubtful, therefore, whether there is any real exertions to attain unto it.

But if he was a man, what hinders his example, all except the working of miracles, from being attained *to by man?*

The evidence of the resurrection of man, as being predicated on the resurrection of Christ, on every supposition, excepting that of his being a real man, seems to lose all its force. St. Paul laid the whole stress and force of his argument, (1 Cor. xv,) in favour of the resurrection of the dead, upon this single fact; viz. the resurrection of Christ. Now if Christ were not a man in every sense of the word, I see no force in his argument. The power that has raised one man to an immortal state, can certainly raise all men to the same state: but how does the resurrection of the Being, by whom man was created, prove the resurrection of any other being except himself? These are difficulties in my mind, to say the least; but then, at the same time, I do not consider these difficulties as absolutely disproving the fact. It is the want of evidence, after all, that is the greatest difficulty with me. And I see nothing to be gained by it, were the Arian hypothesis true.

But if Jesus be a man like ourselves, then we can say, in the language of St. Paul, (2 Cor. iv. 14,) "Knowing, that he, who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." *For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth; even so the son quickeneth whom he will.* (John, v. 21.)

It is on this hypothesis, and, as I conceive, on this only, that we can account for all the innocent infirmities of Jesus—his passions, his suffering, and death. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* (Acts, ii, 36.) Not, *another* Jesus, but, that *same* Jesus who was crucified.

The apostles (if we may except St. Stephen and St. Paul, when they had a vision of Christ) ever prayed to God, as distinguished from Christ; as he directed them: *In that day ye shall ask me nothing:* (John, xvi. 23:) and this they did after his resurrection and ascension. See Acts. iv. 23, 30. *They lifted up their voices to God and said: Lord, thou art God who hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that is therein.—And now Lord behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants that*

with all boldness they may speak thy word—and that signs and wonders may be done in the name of thy holy child (servant) *Jesus.*

From the above, and from all that has been said, it is evident that the apostles, and all who conversed with our Lord, before and after his resurrection, considered him in no other light than simply *a man approved of God, by signs and wonders which God did by him.* (Acts, ii. 22.)

"From this plain doctrine of the scriptures," says Dr. Priestley, "a doctrine so consonant to reason and the ancient prophecies, Christians have at length come to believe what they do not pretend to have any conception of, and that which it is not possible to frame a more express contradiction. For while they consider Christ as the supreme eternal God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible, they moreover acknowledge the Father and the Holy Spirit to be equally *God*, in the same exalted sense, all three equal in power and glory, and yet all three constituting no more than one God."*

Having, therefore, shown that the *unity* of God, and the *humanity* of Christ, is clearly the doctrine of the scriptures, we shall take notice of a few of the writings of the first age of the church on this subject.

"The members of the Jewish church were, in general, in very low circumstances, which may account for their having few persons of learning among them; on which account they were much despised by the richer and more learned gentile Christians, especially after the destruction of Jerusalem, before which event all the Christians in Judea (warned by our Saviour's prophecies concerning the desolation of that country) had retired to the north-east of the sea of Galilee.†

"In general, these ancient Jewish Christians retained the appellation of Nazarenes, and both Origen and Epiphanius acknowledge that the Nazarenes and Ebionites

* Hist. Corrupt. vol. i. p. 3, 4.

† This quotation, and all which follow in this lecture, being taken from Dr. Priestley's *History of Corruptions*, vol. i. I shall only refer to the authors referred to in that work.

were the same people, and held the same tenets, though some of them supposed that Christ was the son of Joseph as well as of Mary, while others of them held that he had no natural father, but had a miraculous birth.* Epiphanius in his account of the Nazarenes (and the Jewish Christians never went by any other name) makes no mention of any of them believing the divinity of Christ, in any sense of the word.

"Almost all the ancient writers who speak of what they call the heresies of the two first centuries, say that they were of *two kinds;* the first were those that thought that Christ was a man only in appearance, and the other that he was a mere man.† Tertullian calls the former *Docetæ,*" (which is the same as the *Gnostics,*) "and the latter *Ebionites.*" (These latter are believed to be those who held to the true doctrine of the scriptures in this particular, but were considered as heretics in the days of Tertullian.)

"Austin, speaking of the same two sects, says, that the former believed Christ to be God, but denied that he was man; whereas the latter believed him to be man, but denied that he was God. Of this latter opinion Austin owns that he himself was, till he became acquainted with the writings of Plato, which in his time were translated into Latin, and in which he learned the doctrine of the *Logos.*

"Now that this second heresy, as the later writers called it, was really no heresy at all, but the plain simple truth of the gospel, may be clearly inferred from the apostle John taking no notice of it, though he censures the former, who believed Christ to be man only in appearance, in the severest manner. And that this was the only heresy that gave him any alarm, is evident from his first epistle, chap. iv. ver. 3, where he says, *every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh* (by which he must have meant *is truly a man*) *is of God.* On the other hand, he says, *every spirit which confesses*

* Haer. 29. Opera, vol. i. p. 125.
† Lardner's Hist. of Heretics, p. 17.

not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God, and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world. For this was the first corruption of the Christian religion by the maxims of heathen philosophy, and which proceeded afterwards, till Christianity was brought to a state little better than paganism.

"Athanasius himself was so far from denying that the primitive Jewish church was properly *Unitarian*, maintaining the simple humanity and not the divinity of Christ, that he endeavours to account for it by saying,* that 'all the Jews were so firmly persuaded that their Messiah was to be nothing more than a man like themselves, that the apostles were obliged to use great caution in divulging the doctrine of the proper divinity of Christ.' But what the apostles did not teach, I think we should be cautious how we believe. The apostles were never backward to combat other Jewish prejudices, and certainly would have opposed this opinion of theirs, if it had been an error. For if it had been an error at all, it must be allowed to have been an error of the greatest consequence.

"Those who held the simple doctrine of the humanity of Christ, without asserting that Joseph was his natural father, were not reckoned heretics by Irenæus, who wrote a large work on the subject of heresies; and even those who held *that* opinion are mentioned with respect by Justin Martyr, who wrote some years before him, and who, indeed, is the first writer extant, of the gentile Christians, after the age of the apostles.

"The manner in which Justin Martyr speaks of these Unitarians, who believed Jesus to be the son of Joseph, is very remarkable, and shows, that, though they even denied the miraculous conception, they were far from being reckoned heretics in his time, as they were by Irenæus afterwards. He says,† 'there are some of our profession who acknowledge him' (Jesus) 'to be the

* De Sententia Dionysii, Opera, vol. i. p. 553.
† Dial. Edit. Thirlby, p. 235.

Christ, yet maintain that he was ψιλος ανθρωπος, *a mere man.*' (And by this term Irenæus, and all the ancients, even later than Eusebius, meant, *a man descended from man.*) 'I do not agree with them, nor should I be prevailed upon by ever so many who hold that opinion; because we are taught by Christ himself not to receive our doctrine from men, but what was taught from the holy prophets and by himself.'

(This language has all the appearance of an *apology* for an opinion contrary to the general and prevailing one. Were not the holy prophets men? and did not Christ say, *My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me?* and did he not prove *that* doctrine to be of God, by the *signs and wonders which God did by him?* To receive therefore the doctrine of God from Christ, or from the holy prophets, i. e. *from men,* is one thing; but to receive the doctrines *of men,* is another, and a very different thing.

Justin Martyr proceeds,*) 'Jesus may still be the Christ of God, though I should not be able to prove his pre-existence, as the son of God who made all things. For though I should not prove that he had pre-existed, it will be right to say that, in this respect only, I have been deceived, and not to deny that he is the Christ, if he appears to be a man born of men, and to have become Christ by election.' This is not the language of a man very confident of his opinion, and who had the sanction of the majority along with him.

"The reply of Trypho the Jew, with whom the dialogue he is writing is supposed to be held, is also remarkable, showing in what light the Jews will always consider any doctrine which makes Christ to be more than man. He says,† 'They who think that Jesus was a man, and, being chosen of God, was anointed Christ, appear to me to advance a more probable opinion than yours. For all of us expect that Christ will be born a man from

* Dial. Edit. Thirlby, p. 225, 235.
† Ibid, p. 235.

man, (ανθρωπος εξ ανθρωπου,) and that Elias will come to anoint him. If he therefore be Christ, he must by all means be a man born of man.'

"We find nothing like *divinity* ascribed to Christ before Justin Martyr, who from being a philosopher became a Christian, but always retained the peculiar habit of his former profession. As to Clemens Romanus, who was cotemporary with the apostles, when he is speaking in the highest terms concerning Christ, he only calls him *the sceptre of the majesty of God.** Whether Justin Martyr was the first who started the notion of the pre-existence of Christ, and of his superangelic or divine nature, is not certain; but we are not able to trace it any higher.

"All the evangelists," says Irenæus,† have delivered to us "the doctrine of one God, and one Christ the son of God;" and invoking the Father,‡ he calls him the only God; and according to several of the most considerable of the early Christian writers, a common epithet by which the Father is distinguished from the Son, is that he alone is αυτοθεος, *God of himself.*

"Origen, quoted by Dr. Clarke,§ says, 'to them who charge us that we believe two Gods, we must reply, that he who is God of himself (αυτοθεος) is *the God* (ὁ θεος); for which reason our Saviour says, in his prayer to the Father, *that they may know thee, the only true God.* But whatever is God besides him who is so of himself, being God only by a communication of his divinity, cannot so properly be called (ὁ θεος) *the God,* but rather (θεος) *a God.*' The same observation had before been made by Clemens Alexandrinus, who also calls the Son a *creature,* and the *work of God.*‖

"Novatian says,¶ that 'the Sabellians make too much of the divinity of the Son, when they say it is that

* Epistle, Section 16. † Lib. 3. cap. 1. p. 199.
‡ Ib. cap. 6. § Ib. p. 5.
‖ Sandii Nucleus Hist. Eccl. p. 94.
¶ Contra Celsum, lib. 6. p. 323. See also cap. 23. and cap. 31.

of the Father, extending his honour beyond bounds. They dare to make him not the Son but God the Father himself. And again, that they acknowledge the divinity of Christ in too boundless and unrestrained a manner.'

"Arnobius says,* 'Christ, a God, under the form of a man, speaking by the order of the principal God.' Again,† 'then at length did God Almighty, the only God, send Christ.' Such language as this was held till the council of Nice.

"Origen candidly acknowledges these adherents to the doctrine of the strict unity of God, pious persons (φιλοθεους). Hence, says he,‡ we may solve the scruples of many pious persons, who through fear lest they should make two Gods, fall into false and wicked notions." (These wicked notions, I apprehend, were the simple truth, but a truth which did not suit the philosophical turn of Origen.) "He endeavours to relieve them in this manner. 'This scruple of many pious persons may thus be solved. We must tell them, that he who is of himself God (αυτοθεος) is God with the article, (ὁ θεος,) but that Christ is God without the article, (θεος,)' as was observed before. How far this solution of the difficulty was satisfactory to these pious unlearned Christians, does not appear. It does not seem calculated to remove a difficulty of great magnitude." (It is very well known, however, to the learned, that in John, i. 1. θεος is used without the article; και θεος ην ὁ λογος, *and the word was a God.*)

But, lest I should swell this work beyond my proposed limits, I must omit many quotations which would be to the point, referring my readers to the work from which they are taken: and shall close this lecture, which is already too long, in the words of Lactantius; who says,§

"Christ taught that there is one God, and that he alone ought to be worshipped; neither did he ever call

* Ad Gentes, lib. 2. p. 50. † P. 57.
‡ Clarke on the Trinity, p. 302.
§ Institutionum, lib. 4. cap. 13.

himself God, because he would not have been true to his trust, if, being sent to take away gods, (that is, a multiplicity of gods,) and to assert one, he had introduced another besides that one. Because he assumed nothing at all to himself, he received the dignity of perpetual priest, the honour of sovereign king, the power of a judge, and the name of God." Here I shall dismiss this subject: and now, let the reader judge for himself.

LECTURE VII.

Because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
ROM. viii. 21.

AS has been proposed, we are now prepared to speak fully of the salvation of man, in the highest sense of the word; or, as it is expressed in our text, *the deliverance of the creature* (which was made subject to vanity, &c.) *from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* But I regret that I am now obliged to abridge what I have written on this subject, as the proposed limits will not admit of my inserting the whole.

I cannot dispense, however, with inserting here a few thoughts (which were written several years ago) on the justice of God; as they have an immediate reference to this subject, and therefore may not be an improper introduction to this lecture. For if they should contain a recapitulation of some of the ideas in the foregoing lectures, it is thought to be not only excusable, but perfectly admissible and proper in this place.

Serious Thoughts on the Justice of God respecting the Fall and Restoration of Man.

GOD is ONE and INDIVISIBLE: and it is conceived, that a Being infinitely perfect must be infinite in all his attributes:—yea, this is a self-evident proposition:—and if such a Being be infinitely GOOD, as well as PERFECT, no one attribute can be opposite to another; for each attribute is consistent with the infinite perfection of all the rest. There can be but one NATURE in the DEITY, though that nature may be variously modified, or have various qualities or properties, as it operates on different beings, or on the same being in different circum-

stances; but all those modifications spring from *infinite goodness*, as their source, and tend to promote the best good of each individual object in the great system of universal being; for as nothing can act contrary to its own nature, so as the nature of God is infinitely good, every act of his, whether it be considered an act of wisdom, mercy, benevolence, or *justice*, must be considered an act of *infinite goodness*. Infinite goodness, or benevolence, (which are about, if not quite, synonymous,) has been defined, and, I think, justly, thus: "*Infinite benevolence consists in a constant determination in God, to do that, in all cases, by which the greatest possible good and happiness of the universe may be promoted.*"* If therefore the above definition be correct, and if it be conceded that God is infinitely benevolent, which none will deny, then all that can be rationally inferred from "a constant determination in God, to do that, in all cases, by which the greatest possible good and happiness of the universe may be promoted," rationally results from the nature and character of God. And, furthermore, as justice is an attribute of Deity, as well as mercy, the exercise of justice, in God, as well as mercy, is an exercise of "a constant determination"—*to do good*; therefore, all that would be inconsistent with such "a constant determination," would be as inconsistent with the *justice* as it would be with the *mercy* of God. In treating, therefore, on the justice of God, let it be remembered that we are treating on an attribute that springs spontaneously from "a constant determination in God to do that, in all cases, by which the greatest possible good and happiness of the universe may be promoted." But as there are some who hold that "the greatest possible good and happiness of the universe" do not necessarily imply the "greatest possible good and happiness"* of each individual that compose the universe, let us reflect, for a few moments, and inquire—whether the greatest possible *evil* and *misery* of the *universe* would not necessarily imply the greatest possible *evil* and *misery* of each *indivi-*

* Dr. Strong, in answer to Dr. Huntington.

dual! It appears that this is as self-evident a proposition as can be named. But if any think otherwise, let them inquire further; if the greatest possible *evil* of the *whole* do not necessarily imply the greatest possible *evil* of each *individual*, and the greatest possible *good* of the *whole* do not necessarily imply the greatest possible *good* of each *individual*, then wherein does the difference consist between the greatest possible *good* and the greatest possible *evil?* Pause!—reflect!—consider!

Again: As benevolence is "a *constant* determination," &c. so *justice*, in God, which is one branch of benevolence, is a *constant* determination, &c. that is, it *constantly* determines whatever it does determine; therefore there never was a time, nor ever will be, when the justice of God could, or will, determine, or even suffer any thing to take place, which will not eventually terminate in the "greatest possible good and happiness" of his creatures. We shall therefore,

I. Consider the *justice* of God, in what is commonly termed the *lapse*, or *fall*, of man. And,

II. Attempt to show that it is not inconsistent with pure and strict justice that the self-same creature, man, should "be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

I. The fall of man has generally been considered altogether a *creature* act, as though the wisdom, justice, or benevolence of God was not in the least consulted or exercised on the occasion; but rather it was in opposition to every attribute of Deity except his foreknowledge, and therefore his wisdom and power were only exercised in providing a remedy. Not that he was under the least obligation to man, after he had sinned, but it was all "out of his mere good pleasure!" Here, as will be made to appear, is the *sole fundamental error in divinity*. It is an *error*, to which all others, of consequence, may be traced. It is unreasonable, unscriptural, and very pernicious. It is unreasonable: 1st. Because it supposes that man by one act of disobedience forfeited every right and title to the divine favour! that it would have been just in God to have cast man off eternally with-

out any remedy! 2dly. It is unreasonable: Because it denies the moral relation between God and his creatures; for if God were under any obligation to man in consequence of that relation which existed between him and them by creation, and in consequence of man's being altogether dependent on him, then that obligation must be as permanent as this relation and dependence, which can neither be increased or diminished by any act of the creature. But it is evident that if God were ever under any obligations, or, in other words, if it were ever consistent with his justice to bestow favours on man in consequence of relation and dependence, it is equally consistent with his justice to bestow favours on them now; for all the relation, in consequence of creation, exists now, between God and his creatures, that there ever did; and man is as much dependent on God now as he ever was, the fall of man notwithstanding. 3dly. It is unreasonable: because it supposes *justice* and *mercy* to be two opposite attributes in the Deity, notwithstanding they come from the same source: and we know that the same fountain cannot send forth salt water and fresh, sweet things and bitter; yet according to this proposition it would be just in God to cast his disobedient children off eternally! but no one will pretend that in so doing, he would be merciful—nor can it be of any good or use to the sufferer, to be endlessly suffering!

This proposition is unscriptural: for there we are taught that "the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope:" (Rom. viii. 20:) but this proposition supposes man's *imperfection* is sin; or "his *inability* is his *criminality*." The scriptures teach us that God loved us while we were dead in trespasses and sins; but this proposition supposes that God loves none but holy beings, and it would not be inconsistent with his justice to make those who are otherwise endlessly miserable! But, above all,

This proposition is pernicious. Let us state it again in full, as it frequently and commonly is stated. Man, in consequence of the fall, forfeited every right and title

to the divine favour, and it would have been just in God to have cut him down as a cumberer of the ground, and cast his soul into hell, where he must have been MISERABLE TO ALL ETERNITY!

Now, upon serious reflection, it must be evident that such a principle is very pernicious; because we cannot conceive of any thing that would be more pernicious, if it were only to be once put in practice, as far as it might be, among men. What would be the practice upon such a principle? Let us examine it with candour and attention. A man has a family of children, who, we will say, have all disobeyed him; (and where is there a man whose children have not disobeyed him more or less;) and what is the consequence? According to the principle under consideration, they have forfeited every right and title to the loving kindness of their father; and all that he does for them is "out of his mere good pleasure;" justice has no claim for them; but it would be no more than just in him to turn them out in the street, and leave them to perish! Do not, kind reader, startle at such a practice! especially while you adhere to the principle! for it is certainly just to endeavour to imitate God! and it will be no more difficult to justify, to your understanding, natural death, inflicted on a child by an earthly parent, than to justify *eternal* death, inflicted by the Father of our spirits! And if you would not be willing to have such a charge brought against you, think, for one moment, what a charge is brought against your Maker? For it is said of him, that, in consequence of the disobedience of his dependent offspring, his justice demanded their eternal death! If this were just in God, why may not the same thing, as far as it is practicable, be just in man? Now look at the idea again. Would not such a practice be pernicious among men? Would not you call such a man a *monster?*—If he dealt in this manner by his children, and they, or any of them, should die in consequence, might he not be indicted for *murder?* And would the court suffer him to come in and plead in his defence that his children were disobedient? And would the jury clear him on this pretence? No. Surely

they would not! Where is the obligation of the parent which existed anterior to the obedience or disobedience of the child? Is not the father under some obligation to his children, in consequence of his being the means, under God, of giving them life and existence? And can this obligation be obliterated by any act of the child? No, surely, it cannot! For this obligation does not depend on any act of the child for its existence, and therefore it cannot be destroyed by any thing the child can do. The smallest capacity will be able to see that a similar relation, only in an infinite degree, exists between God and man by creation, as exists between a father and his children: and as this relation existed before the fall of man, it could not be destroyed by it. Therefore even the strict justice of God, without any regard to his mercy or other attributes, never could require so much against any one as to make him a loser by his existence. The same spirit of justice that would have required so much against any creature as to make him a loser by his existence, would have required that such a creature should not have had a being; unless it can be just to bring a creature into existence merely for the sake of making it miserable! It is altogether a mistaken idea of justice to suppose that man, or even an individual of the human family, ever justly deserved any thing from God that would not terminate in the "greatest possible good and happiness" of such individual. Such an idea of justice cannot be supported by scripture, reason, or the nature of things; and for such a principle to be put in practice among men, would be the most pernicious to society of any thing we can possibly conceive: and to suppose such a principle attached to the Deity, is giving him a character as much worse than that of a *murderer*, as *eternal misery* is worse than *natural death!* But this is not the worst character that is given the Father of the spirits of all flesh: to that of *cruelty*, under the false name of *justice*, has been added that of *partiality*, under the false name of *mercy!* It is not suggested, however, that any body ever meant to bring such a charge against their Maker: No, charity forbids the thought! Yet

such is the state of man, that he often, either ignorantly, or inconsiderately, does that, which his better judgment would recoil at the moment he is brought to see its impropriety. (And perhaps the reader may begin to conclude that the writer of this book is such an one! But, kind reader, suspend your judgment for the present, and read on a little further.)

Think seriously and candidly, for a few moments, on the character of a man who should pronounce a sentence of banishment and death on his children for one offence! And, to complete his character, notwithstanding his sentence of banishment, and of course a lingering death pronounced on all, and notwithstanding they had all disobeyed, and in this sense were equally criminal, and by this sentence equally deserved banishment and death, yet he sits down calmly and deliberately, and selects out a few as his favourites! them he reclaims; them he reforms; and them he prepares for the enjoyment of his glory! while he wreaks his vengeance upon all the rest, "in praise of his vindictive justice!" Thus adding *partiality* to *cruelty*, under the deceptive name of *mercy!* Reader, if such a character in man would appear odious in the extreme, you must be sensible that such a character given to the Deity is changing "the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man." (Rom. i. 23.) It will be perceived by all, that if any of mankind must finally perish, God either left them without a remedy, or else with only such a remedy as that which he knew would finally prove abortive.

There is another consideration which will not only show the perniciousness, but the absurdity of such a principle. It is universally acknowledged, that when God made man and gave him his powers and faculties, that he foresaw all the consequences of such an act: if he did not, and any of those consequences amount to an infinite evil, it is evident that he gave those faculties at an infinite risk! but if he did foresee the consequences, then it necessarily follows that he *designed* all those consequences. There may be consequences, however, which he did not design as an *end*, but only as a *way* or *means* to an *end*. And if he designed all those consequences for

good, that is, if good will succeed and overbalance the evil, then the idea of giving such powers and faculties to man, while possessing such foreknowledge, does not militate against a "constant determination to do that, in all cases, whereby the greatest possible good and happiness of the universe may be promoted;" but if any of these consequences are or will be infinitely evil, then certainly the idea of God's giving those powers and faculties with such foreknowledge militates against such a good character. But perhaps some may say that it ought not to have been taken for granted, that a *foreknowledge* of the consequences of an act necessarily implies a *design* in those consequences, without its first being proved. Then be it so; for although no proposition appears to me more self-evident, yet it is certainly susceptible of proof. So far as man rationally foresees the consequences of his actions, he designs those consequences: perhaps they may not be the main *end* he has in view, yet none of those consequences are *inconsistent* with that main end, unless his own *act* be in itself *inconsistent*. This every one knows from experience. When a man takes his axe and cuts a tree from its stock, or root, does he not design the *fall* of that tree? Most surely; although the fall of the tree may not be his main object. When a man takes down an old building, does he not *design* to make a *dust?* Certainly, he does; although his main object may be to erect a *new house!* Again: If a man were to put into the hands of his child a dose of poison, sufficient to destroy its life, knowing, at the time, that the child would drink it, although he should command it otherwise, would any one say that he did not *design* the *death* of his child? Let conscience give the answer. This rule will hold good in all cases. So when God made man, and gave him his powers and faculties, knowing at the time the consequences, he designed those consequences, let them be good or bad: and if many of those consequences are bad in themselves, unless it be admitted that they are all designed as a *way* to a greater good than could have been "promoted" by preventing those bad consequences by any other means,

even the permission of an act productive of such consequences is derogatory to the character of that Being who determines "to do that, in all cases, whereby the greatest possible good and happiness of the universe may be promoted."

Can a mother forget to have compassion on her suckling? "Yea," saith God, "they may forget!" One mother is so unfeeling towards her suckling, that she consigns it to the flames with her own hands, without either pity or compassion—another equally forgetful, and no less cruel, knowing the weakness and imbecility of her child, leaves it to crawl into the fire itself! How can either be justified? Shall one say that her child was disobedient? and therefore *deserved* such treatment? And shall the other say that she commanded her's not to go near the fire? that she forewarned the child of the awful consequence, if it disobeyed; but it would not mind her; and therefore it went at its own peril! Or shall they both be justified by saying, In what we have done, we have only imitated God! No—put the most favourable construction upon their conduct possible, and they are still *cruel mothers!* "Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee." (Isa. xlix. 15.) No more therefore need to be added, to show that the idea that man ever could, on any principle whatever, be justly excluded from the divine favour, is most pernicious in its practice.

But little now need to be said to show the justice of God in (what is called) the fall of man. It is evident that if man had not been "made *subject* to vanity," he never could have become *vain:* man, however, was not culpable for his being thus made; it was rather his *misfortune* (if it may be called one) than his *fault.* The act of God should prejudice no man: he means every thing which he even *suffers* to take place, for *good.* No man is to be blamed for what exists in his mind, originally or constitutionally, any more than a man is blameable for a natural defect in his body; as an impediment in his *speech,* a *harelip,* or a *crooked foot!* As God is infinitely good, as well as just, it was just in him to communicate every possible good to his creatures; that is,

every possible good which they were capable of receiving. And if God foresaw that a good could be communicated to man by making him "subject to vanity," sin, and corruption, and that this good, in raising him from the dead works of sin, and delivering him from this corruptible state, would more than overbalance the evil of sin itself, then for God *not* to have made man subject to vanity, would have been to withhold all that good which he foresaw could be thus communicated. Thus, if it were just for God to bestow every possible good on man, consistent with his nature, then it was just to make him subject to vanity; i. e. if it be admitted that good will be the final result.

The attribute of mercy never could have been displayed, had it not been for the introduction of sin into the moral system. Thus, "the law entered that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. v. 20, 21.) A father puts his son an apprentice to learn a trade in which he is to use edge tools; he knows that he subjects him to be wounded with every tool he takes into his hand, and that he is more liable in consequence of his inexperience. But he calculates on the *benefit* of this trade, and *that* overbalancing the *evil* which he rationally expects will be met with in obtaining it, he exposes his son to the *evil* for the sake of the *good*. Now is he good to his son in putting him to work as an apprentice, or not? His conduct is surely justifiable. But admitting that he foreknew that the first day of his apprenticeship his son would so wound himself that he would be a cripple ever after, i. e. as long as he should live, would his conduct then be justifiable? i. e. in apprenticing him with this foreknowledge? It surely would not.

Once more: If we suppose that mankind, or at least any of them, in consequence of their existence, experience ninety-nine degrees of evil and misery to a hundred degrees of good and happiness, and it should continue in the same ratio during the whole of their exist-

ence, yet this *one* degree of good and happiness is as good as *one* degree in him who enjoys the "greatest possible good and happiness;" and this one degree of good that overbalances the evil is as much the free gift of God, and is as positively good, as though no evil had been experienced. These creatures, whose sufferings come so near balancing their enjoyments, (but not quite,) will eternally have cause to praise God for their existence, notwithstanding all the evils they have experienced in consequence. On the other hand, if mankind, or any of them, experience more evil and misery than they do good and happiness, and this should continue to be the case during the whole of their existence, the evil which overbalances the good is as positively evil as though they had experienced no good at all. They will eternally have cause to rue their induction into the world, and say, it would have been much better for us not to have had an existence: And if their existence be no benefit to them, then certainly they are under no obligations of gratitude for it. Therefore we cannot conceive how it could have been just in the Deity, who must, in consequence of his omniscience, have seen the end from the beginning, to bring a creature into existence under such circumstances, that, notwithstanding he must necessarily exist, yet it is not only *possible*, but it is *certain*, he will experience more evil and misery than good and happiness in consequence of his existence.

It may be objected, here, that some of the brutal creation experience more pain and misery, in consequence of their existence, than they do ease and pleasure; and, as they have no future state, they are the loser by their existence. This, however, is a proposition that remains to be proved; and therefore ought not to be taken for granted, by any one, without sufficient evidence to support the fact. In the first place, we do not know that those creatures have no future state: the scriptures are rather in favour of their future existence than against it:* but, admitting that they have no future state, it would be im-

* See Psalm cl. 6. Rev. v. 13.

possible to prove that any one of them has more pain than pleasure; because we cannot know the quantity of either, which any one of them enjoys. And even if it could be proved that some of them exist only to languish a few hours in pain, and then be as though they had never been, this would prove nothing against the moral and eternal existence of man. For, "Are ye not much better than they?" (Mat. vi. 26.) No one will pretend that the sufferings of animals are inflicted as a punishment for any crime; and as

> "——————————the Universal Cause
> "Acts not by partial, but by general laws;"

So if there be more ease and pleasure, than pain and misery, in a whole species of the brutal creation, it helps to support our argument; for natural pain, when it becomes intolerable, destroys all sense, and therefore ceases to be pain. Let us inquire which is the most conducive to life, pleasure, or pain?—if the former, then the bare existence of life, even for a short period, is a demonstration that there has been an overbalance of ease and pleasure sufficient to sustain life for that period: and pleasure is pleasure, let it arise from what source it will. Life itself, therefore, in those animals we are pleased to call irrational, is a demonstration that there is as great a balance in favour of pleasure and happiness as there is in favour of life; although all those pleasures may be nothing more than the pleasures of sense. But the pleasures of sense will never satisfy the desires of a mind destined to a state of immortality: nothing but spiritual food can support a spiritual and eternal existence: and as man is destined to live eternally, he must be fed with the "bread of God which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever." (John, vi. 33, 51.) On these premises, we may

> "Vindicate the ways of God to man."

If God foresaw that, notwithstanding the humble grade in which he was pleased to place man, (being more help-

less in his infant state than the beasts of the field,) he should not only be able to raise him from this state, but (by carrying him through all the scenes of trouble incident to this state of vanity) should cause him to experience much more of his divine goodness, and should finally bring him to the enjoyment of much more happiness, than what he otherwise could have enjoyed; then certainly it was not only consistent with the justice of God, but also consistent with his love and mercy, to subject man to all the inconveniences, and even miseries, attending this mortal life.

II. We shall now attempt to show that as it was consistent with the justice of God to make man subject to vanity, so it is not now inconsistent with the same justice to deliver him from this bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Let us inquire here for what purpose did God *make man subject to vanity?* I have introduced these words several times, and although the reader undoubtedly recollects the text, yet perhaps it will be well to quote it in this place. "For the *creature* was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope: because the *creature* itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." The original word rendered *creature*, in the above text, is rendered *creation* in the 22d verse. "For we know that the whole *creation* groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." In Scarlett's translation of the New Testament, the above text, with the preceding verse, is translated thus: "For the earnest expectation of the *creation** is waiting for the revelation of the sons of

* The Greek word is κτισις, *ktisis*, and is thus defined in the Greek Lexicon: KTISIS, *rerum creatarum universitas*, the whole created universe, or the universe of created things. KTISIS, *totum genus humanum*, the whole family of man; *totum*, the whole, every part of, *genus*, a kindred, breed, lineage, extraction, race, stock, or family; *humanum*, belonging to mankind, belonging to a rational creature. The reader will therefore see that if any word in the Bible can mean the *creation*, or the whole human family, this word must; and all that is

God; (because the *creation* was subjected to vanity, not by choice, but through him who subjected it;) in hope that even the *creation* itself will be freed from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we know that the whole *creation* groaneth together, and laboureth in pain together till now." For what purpose then was man, or the *creation*, made subject to vanity? Was it that he might NOT become *vain?* Was it necessary that man should be made subject to vanity, that he might *not* become vain? Or was it that the goodness of God might be more fully manifested in delivering man from this state of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God? If the latter, which is evidently the truth, then it was not only consistent with the justice of God that man should be thus subjected, but the same justice now requires that man should be delivered from this corruptible state agreeably to the original purpose of God. For even should we admit that God was under no obligation to have made this promise, that is, "that the creature itself (or the self-same creature that was made subject to vanity) shall be delivered," yet having made this promise, justice to his word now requires that it should be faithfully carried into effect.

[*What follows in this lecture is principally extracted from a discourse written in* 1806, *on the same subject, and which I have been often solicited to publish.*]

But several queries here naturally arise. Why did not God place man in this glorious state in the first place? Where was the necessity of his being made subject to vanity? Why could not all this evil have been prevented? Could not God have created man, and placed him in a state of perfection, from which it would have been impossible for him to fall?

contained in this word, (which is what was made subject to vanity, let it be more or less,) shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Answer: It is very difficult for the human mind to conceive of the possibility of God's creating an infinite being like himself. For the Deity himself is no more than infinite; and as we receive of his fulness, (John, i. 16. Col. i. 19,) man could not have been infinite without possessing the whole of Deity, in which case he would not have been a separate being from him, but would have been identically the same being, which destroys the idea of creation. How, therefore, can we conceive of the possibility of two infinite beings, unless we can conceive of two *infinities* in one *infinitude?* Reason forbids the idea of an infinite created being, for an effect must be dependent on its antecedent cause, but an infinite being cannot be dependent. Then for a being to exist capable of multiplying and propagating its kind, he must necessarily be finite, and dependent on an infinite cause. And as man must necessarily be finite, so he must necessarily be fallible, or subject to vanity. And even admitting that mankind might have remained in a sinless state of perfection, yet they would have been as much dependent on God for *that state* as they are for their existence.

For the proof of this, I need only refer you to the words of Christ, who, it is agreed, was without sin. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can *do nothing* of himself, but what he seeth the Father do:—I can of mine own self *do nothing.*" (John, v. 19, 30.) Words could not have been spoken more expressive of dependence, in the strictest sense.

But I will now suppose that it was possible for God to have kept all mankind in a *sinless state*, as pure as Christ himself—that God might have placed man in a state of as great perfection as human nature will admit, with a determination to keep him from falling. Yet, are we sure that this would have been for the best? Are we authorized to say that mankind would have been more happy, under these circumstances, than what they eventually will be now? To determine which, let us look a little into the nature of the happiness of man.

The happiness of rational beings depends on the *enjoyment*, and not on the *possession*, of life. It is true, that a man must *possess* life, or he cannot *enjoy* it. But to possess the sensibility of life, without the capacity or ability of enjoying it, would be the greatest evil of which the human mind can possibly conceive. And for a person or being to enjoy life, he must be capable either of giving or of receiving benefits; or else be as he is, capable of both—of loving, and being loved. Hence we may see the propriety of the different *grades* in the circumstances of rational beings, or human nature. If all had been alike independent, (admitting that they must necessarily exist,) gratitude would have been entirely out of the question. There could have been no such thing in the universe. For if there had been no being in want, no being could ever have given or received a benefit. Some people have undertaken to tell how glorious and happy the Deity was before creation, and how glorious and happy he might have eternally been, even if he had never created intelligent beings. But if I can form any conception of the happiness of God before creation, it must have consisted in the glorious contemplation of his bringing an innumerable race of intelligences into existence, on whom he was determined to bestow infinite benefits. For I cannot conceive of a greater evil than a consciousness of an eternal self-existence, without being capable of giving or receiving a benefit.

The glorious attribute of *mercy* never could have been displayed, if sin had not been introduced into the moral system. It is not only necessary that finite creatures should *be* dependent; but it is equally necessary that they should *feel* their dependence, in order for them to be filled with gratitude and love towards their benefactor. And no man can feel his dependence without being made fully sensible of it, which he never could have been, without experiencing a lapse, or want, either in himself, or seeing it in others. It is true, it is not absolutely necessary that a man should experience death, *in himself*, in order to be convinced that he is mortal; but if it were possible for a man to live to an advanced age,

without experiencing pain or sickness, and without seeing the effects of it in others, or hearing of such a thing as natural death, you would hardly be able to convince him, by words, that he was mortal; i. e. subject to death. If children were as capable of taking care of themselves, the first moment of their existence, as they are at twenty-one years of age, and were considered as free at that time, they would have no more regard for their father than for any other man. And on the other hand, parents feel the most tenderness towards their children, at the time when the children are mostly dependent on their parental care and attention.

If this mode of reasoning be just, which, I believe, none can deny, then what must be the paternal love of God toward his wanting children, who are wholly dependent on him at all times, and that too in the strictest sense? yea, and infinitely more so, than what the most helpless infant can be on its own mother? From these considerations, the love of God toward his wanting dependent children can be nothing short of infinite. And God has placed his creatures in the most likely situation to experience and enjoy his infinite love. By placing them in the lowest *grade*, in the most finite capacity possible, God can now display all his divine attributes upon them; at least, all that can be communicated to finite beings. This leads me to conclude that man will be more happy, eventually, than what he *would* have been, yea, more happy than what he *could* have been, if he had not been *made subject to vanity*.

I apprehend that a capital objection may be started here. It may be said that this doctrine opens a door to licentiousness. That, according to the premises laid down,—the greater *evil*, the greater *good!*—the more sin a man commits, the more happiness he will enjoy in another world!! &c.

But stop. Let us not judge too hastily. It does not necessarily follow from these premises, that all must be equally vain, or sinful, in order to be equally happy. But it is only necessary that all should be alike *subject* to vanity, or sin. If ten men were to be equally

exposed to fall into a pit, infested with venomous serpents, nine of them should fall in, and one only be bitten by a serpent, the whole ten would experience the danger; and if the same hand of providence that prevented the one from falling should deliver the nine from the pit, and restore the one bitten to health, all would have reason to be thankful; the one that wholly escaped owes as much for his safety, as the one who was bitten does for his deliverance and restoration.

Let us now apply this similitude to our present subject. The more we can realize the benefits which we receive from God, the greater happiness we enjoy. And there was no other way, that we can conceive, whereby we could have realized the divine benefits so well, as first to be placed in the very lowest scale of being, and *made subject to vanity*, and then raised from this state to the perfect stature of a man in Christ Jesus. Hence the propriety of our being made subject to vanity. We are so constituted as to be able continually to participate in the goodness of God, by receiving moral instructions from every enjoyment of sense: our kind and benevolent Parent has been pleased to give us such moral lessons of instruction as our humble capacities are capable of receiving. And as we grow in knowledge and grace, so we are brought to have more and more of a realizing sense of the goodness of God—discover more and more of his wisdom and love—see more and more of the propriety of his subjecting us to vanity, to open a glorious door of *hope*—whereby he might make wonderful displays of divine grace, in delivering us from this state of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. This brings me to the main subject of this lecture; viz.

To show that the self-same creature that was subjected to vanity, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

I. And *first*, it may be observed from the above, that very little need be said under this head. For it is presumed that it has been shown already to the full understanding and satisfaction of the hearer, that this *creature*, who was made subject to vanity, is *the whole fabric of ra-*

tional beings; or the whole family of human nature. It is true the word is in the singular number, like the word *creation,* which, in its most unlimited sense, signifies the whole created universe. There is but one creation: even so human nature is ONE; of which Christ is the HEAD. And we know of no more than one *human nature,* although this nature may exist in a multiplicity of human beings; of which Christ is styled the *first born from the dead.*

Having established the idea of this *creature* beyond all contradiction or dispute, all I wish now under this head is, that my friendly auditors, as well as all others, should admit that the text itself is true. For, admitting the truth of the text, it proves all that we wish to have proved by it. "Because *the creature itself* (that is, the self-same creature) *shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption.*" Words could not have been more conclusive or explicit. Whatever, whoever, and all that have been made subject to vanity, or sin, shall be delivered from the effects of sin and vanity, which is the bondage of corruption.

Now I am willing that any one should say that this creature does not mean all mankind, if he pleases. But it must be remembered, that if any beings can be pointed out, who were not included in the κτισις, *creation,* or *creature,* spoken of in the text, there is no evidence to prove that such beings were made subject to vanity; and if not subject to vanity, certainly they could not become vain, and therefore they stand in no need of deliverance.

It is presumed that no one will pretend to say that we have not put a proper construction upon the text, so far, at least: and it is also presumed that no one will dispute the truth of it, for if the text be false, I cease to be accountable. And if the truth of this text may be called in question, the truth of many more, purporting the same thing, might, with equal propriety, be questioned. As the following: "For as in Adam *all die,* even so (that is, in like manner) in Christ *shall all be made alive.*" (1 Cor. xv. 22.) If the text under consideration be not true, I do not know as this is, as it was written by the

same apostle; but admitting this to be truth, it amounts to the same thing as the one under consideration. Some have pretended that all men died several deaths in Adam; of which, however, I am willing to confess my ignorance; but admitting that *all men* died ten thousand deaths in Adam, if this text be true, *all men* shall be made ten thousand times alive in Christ; and whether the life or lives given us in Christ are better, or not so good, as that or those which were lost in Adam, the reader must judge. If by Adam, in this text, is meant the earthy man, I can very easily conceive how that *all die* in Adam; and if by Christ is meant a quickening spirit, it is not difficult to understand how that all are made alive in Christ.

I shall, however, introduce here some further scripture testimony, to prove the certainty of the salvation of man.

The first promise of God, which seems to indicate the coming Messiah, is contained in the denunciation of God on the head of the deceiver. "It (the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. iii. 15.) A bruise on the heel, however great, is a curable wound; but a bruise on the head (sufficiently great) produceth death. Hence we read in the New Testament, "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, so he (Christ) took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) From the above testimony, I believe the *devil*, whatever we are to understand by that epithet, will be finally destroyed. Yes, completely destroyed, so that he will no longer exist: which leads me also to conclude that the devil is not a creature of God, no, not in any sense of the word.

Passing on, we read, that God will not "curse the ground any more for man's sake—while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest shall not cease." (Gen. viii. 21, 22.) We feel just as sure of this, therefore, as we are, that "it is impossible for God to lie." (Heb. vi.

18.) The gospel promise made to Abraham is also predicated on the same immutable principle; and by that promise all the nations, families, and kindred of the earth are blessed. (Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxii. 18. Acts, iii. 25. Gal. iii. 8.) The inspired apostle declares that the seed in whom the promise is made is Christ; (Gal. iii. 16;) hence all nations, &c. are blessed in Christ the seed of Abraham. That this blessing is not only spiritual, but that it contains all spiritual blessings, we are assured not only from Gal. iii. 8, referred to above, but also from Eph. i. 3, and on.

The sweet singer in Israel says, (Ps. xxii. 27,) "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." This perfectly corresponds with the song of those whom the revelator saw, (Rev. xv. 2, 4,) "stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing,"—(O how beautiful are the words of their song!)—"who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." This also agrees with the testimony in Psalm lxxxvi. 9. "All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name."

But lest some should say that these prophecies only refer to the Millennium, or to some glorious reign of Christ on earth, it may be observed, that there are some nations, which, as nations at least, are entirely extinct: and therefore, if all the nations now on the earth should worship and glorify the name of the Lord, this would not fulfil the prophecy; because there are other nations whom God has made. These must also come and worship before him. "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. *He will swallow up death in victory:* and the Lord God will

wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for JEHOVAH hath spoken it." (Isa. xxv. 6—8.) Now for a comment on this passage, turn to the words of St. Paul: (1 Cor. xv. 54, 55:) "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory.* O death! where is thy sting? O grave! (ᾅδη, *O hell!*) where is thy victory?" See also, Hosea, xiii. 14.

Now if this victory be obtained, and ᾅδης, *hades*, the mansion of the dead, be destroyed, when this mortal puts on immortality, it shows that it is after this mortal shall have put on immortality, that this feast of fat things, &c. is to be made unto all people.

As a further corroboration of these facts, read Eph. i. 9, 10. Col. i. 16—20, inclusive.

But the most remarkable passage of all, and one which cannot be reconciled with a limited salvation, is (Rev. v. 13,) in these words: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." Now were I permitted to frame a sentence which would exactly comport with my own sentiments, I could not frame one more to my liking. This surely is not the language of *miserable* beings, beings in *torment;* yet it is the language of every creature in heaven above, or on earth beneath. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. xxi. 4.) "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth:—And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." (ver. i. 5.) But, thank God! I read of no new *hell!* and I trust for this very good reason: because there will be no occasion for any.

I read, that "God our Saviour will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." I

read nothing which contradicts it. Also, "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and live:" and there is nothing in all the Bible to contradict it. In order for the testimony to be as strong against the doctrine for which I contend as it is in its favour, we ought to be able to find testimony like the following: viz. "God our Saviour will *not* have all men to be saved—God *is* willing that *some* should *utterly perish*; and that all should *not* come to repentance and live!" But such testimony does not exist: and even if it did, it would not prove the contrary of that for which I am contending. It would only prove that the scriptures contradict themselves, and therefore can be no longer the rule and guide of our faith.

If the scriptures only contained as strong proof against the salvation of all men as they do in favour of that glorious hypothesis, it is my humble opinion, not only that they would be, but that they ought to be, discarded by every rational mind. Let us read, "God so *hated* the world, that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, not to *save* the world; but that the world through him might be *condemned!*" and who would trust in such scripture for salvation? Answer: Not one. Now, to the eternal praise of our heavenly Father, in gratitude let it be written as with the pen of a diamond on each of our hearts, that exactly the reverse of the above sentence are the words of Christ.

But as we would not wish to introduce evidence more than sufficient to prove a fact, I shall dismiss this article, and come to the last thing proposed; viz.

2. To point out this deliverance; and show by what means it shall be carried into effect.

Perhaps none would object against the idea of the *whole creation's* being delivered from the bondage of corruption, in a natural sense, provided it could be proved that a part of them would afterward be consigned over to endless misery. This (according to scholastic divinity) appears to be agreeable to sound ORTHODOXY; i. e. that even the wicked shall be delivered from their graves, and their bodies prepared by the almighty power of God, to

endure endless pain and suffering in a lake of material fire and brimstone. But such ones do not consider that an incorruptible and immortal being is not susceptible of suffering. They do not consider that there are some things, of which the human mind can conceive, which are impossible (Heb. vi. 18,) even for a God to perform. Such are those things which are contrary to his nature; or contrary to the nature and fitness of things. How can an immortal body suffer? For that which causes pain, or annoys the body, must, if continued, finally produce a dissolution; and an immortal body cannot be dissolved. *All suffering must be either tolerable or intolerable:* if tolerable, it may be endured; if intolerable, it must be short. For the very moment that pain or suffering becomes intolerable, it destroys all sense. And as pain naturally serves to imbecilitate, or weaken the constitution, it must, as a natural consequence, if continued, become intolerable. Hence suffering must eventually cease, upon any calculation whatever. A full conviction of this has led some to suppose that the *second death* will be a second dissolution of the body—that the wicked will not be raised with incorruptible, but with corruptible bodies, and therefore die a *second time*, in a natural sense. This idea appears to have arisen from a groundless conclusion that the wicked will suffer in a natural sense after the resurrection, in a lake of material fire and brimstone, or in *hell;* but as the scriptures do not justify the idea of a *corruptible resurrection*, I shall take up no more time respecting it.

It is now taken for granted, and I believe all will concede to the idea, that a deliverance from the bondage of corruption, in a natural sense, can be nothing short of a deliverance from a mortal to an immortal state; from a corruptible, to a state of incorruption; in which state no being can possibly suffer in a natural sense, any more than light can suffer by the power of darkness.

But the deliverance from the bondage of corruption, of which the text more particularly speaks, is a deliverance in a moral sense; that is, a deliverance into *the glorious liberty of the children of God.* And what kind

of liberty is this? Is it liberty to sin?—to commit all manner of abominations? No! The children of God, in a spiritual and moral sense, have not, neither do they wish for any such liberty. Hence a deliverance from the bondage of corruption, in a moral sense, is a deliverance from sin. It is a deliverance from *vanity*—from folly, ignorance, envy, hatred, injustice, cruelty, bigotry, falsehood, superstition, pride covetousness, and all the corruptions that infest the human heart. This is what the creature shall be delivered from. And what other deliverance does he stand in need of? A deliverance in this sense would be a deliverance from the lowest *hell!* (Psalm lxxxvi. 13.)

Christian liberty is the liberty of serving God in sincerity—of loving him with all the heart, soul, mind, might, and strength; and of loving our neighbours as ourselves—of doing good to all men as we have opportunity, and recommending it more especially to the household of the faithful—of doing unto others as we should wish and reasonably expect them to do unto us, under a change of circumstances—of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, mitigating the circumstances of widows and orphans in their afflictions, and of living lives unspotted from the world. This is pure and undefiled religion, in the exercise of full gospel liberty; (James, i. 27;) and the gospel (viz. the good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people) gives no other liberty but this. And this is the liberty into which the creature, (κτισις, *totum genus humanum*,) the whole race of mankind, SHALL BE DELIVERED.

Here, again, I am obliged to throw out a number of pages, in which I attempted to show by what means this deliverance will be carried into effect; and yet, after all, I shall extend the work beyond my proposed limits.

I have only room to say, in general terms, that, as the diseases of the body are mere privations of health, so the disorders of the mind are all merely *negative*, a lack or want of their contrary virtues; the same as darkness is nothing more than the absence or want of light. Hence ignorance, folly, injustice, hatred, cruelty, &c. are only

the want of knowledge, wisdom, justice, love, mercy, &c. and, therefore, these are the sovereign remedies for the mind. Yea, all the remedies for the moral maladies and vices of the human heart, are to be sought for in their contrary virtues. These are the remedies which were manifested in Jesus; and therefore he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: (Cor. i. 30:) i. e. he becomes so by his example; and in the observance of which, we find a deliverance from sin.

I might here speak of the glorious consequences of this deliverance; which can be nothing short of the final emancipation of all rational beings from the bondage of sin and death, into the life, light, and liberty, of the children of God; but, for reasons before given, I must hasten to a close.

The doctrine herein inculcated rests on the divine and infinite prescience of JEHOVAH—the immutability of his counsel, and the perfection of his nature and designs—all concentrating in infinite and eternal goodness.

By this system, we are enabled to behold a God, infinitely *good*, as well as *great*, whom we can worship without distraction. According to this system, there is no such thing as a *secret will* in opposition to that which is *revealed*—no need of racking one's imagination, to distinguish between *permissive* and *decretal* events—no events too small to come under the divine prescience; and none foreknown which were not designed to be—no imperfection or defect in the great *whole;* nor in the several parts only when considered in their separate capacity, so that their relation and connexion are not fully discovered. All is harmony in God, its several parts have their proper place, and all is perfect. No evil but what shall be eradicated; no vice but what shall be overcome by virtue; no hatred but what shall be removed by love; no death but what shall be swallowed up in victory; and no *devil* but what shall be destroyed by Christ! (Heb. ii. 14.) When these things are accomplished, then, GOD, who is LOVE, shall be *all* in *all*. (1 Cor. xv. 28.)

LECTURE VIII.

To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. ISAIAH, viii. 20.

FROM the foregoing lectures, it will have been perceived, that the nature of God is LOVE, and that all his attributes partake of this heavenly and divine principle; that he stands in the same moral relation to all rational beings, and that his purposes are immutable—that man was made originally subject to vanity, without any choice or consent of his own, as he could not have been consulted about it; that his sin consisted in his forsaking his state of innocence, and pursuing the path of disobedience—that sin is a violation of that moral and divine law which God hath implanted in the understanding; which law is the knowledge man has of moral good; and the transgression of which bringeth death—that man, in his present constitution and organization, is naturally mortal; yet, as death in Adam seemed to be occasioned by sin, so sin in others often is the occasion of natural death; yet death, whether in a natural or moral sense, is finally, and fully, the *wages* of sin—that salvation consisteth, 1st, in a salvation from sin; and of course from consequent guilt and condemnation; and, 2d, in a deliverance from death, by the resurrection of man to a state of immortality—that these glorious truths have been made manifest in and through Jesus Christ, a man approved of God by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him—that as God raised Jesus from the dead, and hath given him power over all flesh, so it is equally true and clear that he will raise up us also by Jesus; i. e. even the self-same creature which was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him

who subjected it; and, pursuant to a glorious hope, shall deliver us, and all mankind, *totum genus humanum*, from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

These things having been proved, and amply supported by the law and the testimony, there could not now remain even the shadow of a doubt upon the mind, were it not for the unreasonable prejudices, the unfounded dogmas, and vain traditions of men.

That these dogmas are founded in error, is what now remains to be proved. It will not be necessary to take up the various passages of scripture on which a contrary doctrine has been predicated, and by which, for a long period, it has been defended. This would exceed our limits; and at the same time might not be so convincing a proof, as testimony more positive, and more direct.

I choose, therefore, in this lecture, to strike at the very foundation, or main pillars, on which *the cruel and unmerciful doctrine of endless misery* is supposed to rest; and if these can be removed, the whole superstructure must fall to the ground.*

The doctrine of endless misery is grounded principally on certain equivocal and convertible terms used in the holy scriptures: (which words, in the *original*, convey no such ideas:)—To give the doctrine, therefore, a full and complete refutation, little more is necessary than

* This lecture is the substance of two discourses which were delivered at Langdon, N. H. July 22d, 1805, and were immediately printed, and remain to this day unanswered. The substance of those discourses was again published, in a different form, in the state of New York, in 1816. And at each publication the learned clergy have been respectfully called upon to show wherein these statements are incorrect. They have not seen fit to do it; and, it is believed, for this good reason, because they know the statements are true.

As, therefore, the most important facts contained in this lecture have been more than *thirteen years* before the public, and yet remain uncontroverted, they now come forth with this additional evidence of their truth. Because it is fair to presume, (the facts here stated being so important in themselves to the cause of religion,) that if they could have been contradicted, with any colour of evidence, they would have been before this time.

barely to define and explain those words on which the doctrine is supposed to rest.

These words may be classed as follow: viz.

1. Words which signify the supposed place of torment.

2. Words which signify the nature of punishment.

3. Words which signify the duration of punishment. And,

4. Words which signify the nature or disposition of God in the infliction of punishment.

1. Words which signify the supposed place of never ceasing torment.

The supposed place of punishment is generally called *Hell!* But my readers will be astonished when they see what little grounds the clergy have had to suppose this word signifies a place of never ceasing torment in another state of existence.

Hell is a Saxon word, and originally signified very near, if not exactly, the same as the Greek ἀδης, *hades*, or Hebrew שאול, *scheol*, a *concealed* or *unseen place*, and therefore was a very proper word to be used in the translation.*

The best mode of understanding the word is to refer to all the passages where *scheol* or *hades* is used in the original.

Hades is used upwards of fifty times in the Septuagint, in the books of the Old Testament; fourteen times in the Apocrypha; and eleven times in the New Testa-

*"Ἀδης, Ἀϊδης, (as the word is spelt in *Homer* and *Hesiod*,) *obscure, dark, invisible*, from α, neg. and ιδειν, *to see*. [Literally, *unseen*.]

"*The invisible receptacle* or *mansion of the dead*, in general.

"Our *English*, or rather *Saxon*, word *Hell*," (says Lord King, as quoted by Parkhurst,) "in its original signification (though it is now understood in a more limited sense) exactly answers to the *Greek* word *Hades*, and denotes a *concealed* or *unseen place*; and this sense of the word is still retained in the *eastern*, and especially in the *western*, counties of *England*; to *hele* over a thing, is to *cover* it. See Lord King's History of the Creed, ch. iv." Doddridge on Rev. i. 18. *Hell* is used for the Heb. שאול, or Greek ἀδης, in Ps. xlix. 14, 15. lv. 15. lxxxviii. 3. lxxxix. 48, according to the old English translation retained in our liturgy." See Parkhurst's Greek Lex. under Ἀδης.

ment; about one third of which are rendered *the grave*, in the common translation. Literally, it is evidently used for the *mansion of the dead*. But, figuratively, it represents *darkness* or *sorrow* of the mind.

Jacob says, (Gen. xxxvii. 35,) "I will go down into שאול, (*hades, hell*, or *the mansion of the dead*,) to my son mourning." He could not mean a place of torment: neither could he mean a single grave, for he supposed his son to be torn in pieces by wild beasts: but he undoubtedly meant the general state of the dead, let that be what it may.

David says, (Ps. lxxxvi. 13,) "For great is thy mercy toward me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the *lowest hell*." Here *scheol* or *hades* is used in a figurative sense. It undoubtedly means the deepest affliction.

I have examined every passage in the Septuagint and Greek Testament where the word ᾅδης, *hades*, is used, and cannot find it used in any sense essentially different from the two passages which I have named.

1 Sam. ii. 6. "The Lord killeth and he maketh alive: he bringeth down to *hades*, and bringeth up." See also Tobit, xiii. 2. Wisdom, xvi. 13. xvii. 14. These books, although not canonical, will show in what sense the word *hades* was used at the time they were written.

2 Sam. xxii. 6. "The sorrows of *hades* compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me." Ps. xviii. 5. Compare with cxvi. 3, by which it will be seen that *hades* and *death* are used as synonymous terms.

Jonah, ii. 2. "Out of the belly of *hades* cried I, and thou heardest my voice." In what kind of *hell* was Jonah, when he offered up this prayer?

Hosea, xiii. 14. "I will ransom them from the power of *hades*; I will redeem them from *death*: O death, I will be thy plagues; O *hades*, I will be thy destruction!" This needs no comment.

Job prays, that the Lord would hide him in *hades*, and keep him secret until his wrath be past: (Job, xiv. 13:) —and many other passages might be brought, all in perfect harmony with the above; but these are sufficient to show that the mansion or state of the dead, or a secret and concealed place, is the most that was ever meant by ᾅδης, *hades*, or *hell*, when used in a literal sense. And,

figuratively, it only refers to the sorrows of the mind which are experienced in this life. For all such pains and sorrows were spoken of, as in the present or past tense; which will be seen by recurring to the passages again.* See also the note on page 175.

If we turn to the New Testament, we find the same use of *hades*. It is used three times by our Saviour. Mat. xi. 23, and its parallel text, Luke, x. 15. "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to *hades*." Here *hades* is put in opposition to those privileges which Capernaum then enjoyed, and which, in a very short time, were taken from them.

Mat. xvi. 18. "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of *hades* shall not prevail against it." As much as if he had said, "All the powers of darkness, yea, *death* and *the grave*, shall not prevail against my church."

Luke, xvi. 22, 23. "The rich man also died and was buried; and in *hades* he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." This being a parable, both the beggar and the rich man are represented as being susceptible of happiness or misery, even in a state of death. The *hades*, therefore, represents the mansion of the dead in which Abraham, Lazarus, and the rich man, were all supposed to be: otherwise we cannot account for the conversation which is supposed to take place between the rich man and Abraham.†

* If any one wishes to be further satisfied in regard to the use of *hades*, let him examine the following passages, in which (although I have not the Septuagint now by me to compare them, yet, I think) the word will be found in most, if not all, of them. Gen. xlii. 38. xliv. 31. Deut. xxxii. 22. 1 Sam. ii. 6. 1 Kings, ii. 6, 9. Job, vii. 9. xi. 8. xvii. 13. xxi. 13. xxvi. 6. Ps. vi. 5. ix. 17. xvi. 10. xxx. 3. xxxi. 17. xlix. 15. lv. 15. lxxxviii. 3. lxxxix. 48. cxxxix. 8. Prov. i. 12. v. 5. vii. 27. ix. 18. xv. 11, 24. xxiii. 14, Gr. *death*. xxvii. 20. Eccl. ix. 10. Cant. viii. 6. Isa. v. 14. xiv. 9, 15. xxviii. 15, 18. lvii. 9. Ezek. xxxi. 16, 17. xxxii. 21, 27. Amos, ix. 2. Hab. ii. 5.

† By the rich man, I have no doubt, we are to understand the house of Israel, or particularly the high priest, in whom all the tribes were represented; by Lazarus, the beggar, we are to understand the Gentiles; and by Abraham and his bosom, the gospel dispensation. See Notes on Parables, p. 217.

Hades is not found in the gospels of either Mark or John.

Acts, ii. 27, 31. "He, (David,) seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in *hades*, neither his flesh did see corruption." This is quoted from Ps. xvi. 10; and whether it be applied to the soul of David, or the soul of Jesus, no one will construe *hades* here to signify a place of *torment*.

Hades is used once by St. Paul. (1 Cor. xv. 55.) "O death, where is thy sting? O *hades*, where is thy victory?"—which compare with Hosea, xiii. 14.

It is not found in the epistles of Peter, James, John, or Jude. It is found four times in the Revelation, ch. i. 18. vi. 8. xx. 13, 14, which the reader will turn to and examine.

In all these places, nothing more can be made out from the word *hades*, than what has been already given, particularly in the note on page 175.

Another word, invariably translated *hell*, in the New Testament, but which is no where used in that sense by the LXX, (i. e. in the Greek version of the Old Testament,) is γεεννα, *gehenna*; which, literally, is *the valley of Hinnom*.

"Γαιεννα is used by the LXX for the Heb. גיהנם, Josh. xviii. 16. So Γεεννα of the New Testament is in like manner a corruption of the two Heb. words גי *a valley*, and הנם *Hinnom*, the name of a person who was once the possessor of it. This *valley of Hinnom* lay near Jerusalem, and had been the place of those abominable sacrifices in which the idolatrous Jews burnt their children alive to *Moloch*, *Baal*, or *the Sun*. A particular place in this valley was called *Tophet*, from the *fire-stove*, Heb. תפת, in which they burned their children to *Moloch*.* In

* "And from the *Tophet*, or *fire-stove*, in which they burned their children, the *place* or *valley* was called *Tophet*. See Jer. vii. 32. xix. 6, 12, 13. And I think with *Bate*, (whom see in Crit. Heb. under תפת,) that this derivation is preferable to the common one, from תף, *a drum* or *tabret*, as if the place were so called from the *drums* or *tabrets* which they used to beat, in order to drown the shrieks and cries

the New Testament, Γεεννα τυ πυρος, *The Gehenna of fire*, Mat. v. 22, does, I apprehend, in its outward and primary sense, relate to that dreadful doom of being *burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom.*"* See Parkhurst's Greek Lexicon, under Γεεννα.

Thus, I have the authority of PARKHURST, and (as will be seen by the note below) of CRUDEN, (and I might quote several others,) that γεεννα, literally, signifies the *valley of Hinnom;* and what evidence has Parkhurst, or any one else, given, that it signifies any thing else? Answer: His mere *ipse dixit*, and nothing else; and, for this very good reason, no other evidence exists.

The most learned have not proved, neither will they

of the innocent victims during those infernal sacrifices." See Parkhurst's Heb. Lex. under תֹּפֶת, p. 599

* "The valley of Hinnom, in the Heb. is *Gehennon*, whence comes the word *Gehenna*." See Cruden's Concordance, under the article *Valley*.

"It is thought that *Tophet* was the butchery, or place of slaughter at Jerusalem, lying to the south of the city, in the valley of the children of Hinnom. It is also said that a constant fire used to be kept there, for burning the carcases and other filthiness, that was brought thither from the city. Isaiah seems to allude to this custom, of burning dead bodies in *Tophet*, when, speaking of the defeat of the army of Sennacherib, he says, 'For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large. The pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.' Isaiah, xxx. 33. Others think the name of *Tophet* is given to the valley of Hinnom, because of the sacrifices that were offered there to the *god Moloch*, by beat of *drum*, which in Hebrew is called *Toph*. It was in this manner that the sacrifices were offered. The statue of Moloch was of brass, hollow within, with its arms extended, and sloping a little forward. They lighted a great fire within the statue, and another before it. They put upon its arms the child they intended to sacrifice, which soon fell into the fire at the foot of the statue, putting forth cries, as may easily be imagined. To stifle the noise of these cries and howlings, they made a great rattling of drums and other instruments, that the spectators might not be moved with compassion at the clamours of those miserable victims." Jeremiah upbraids the Israelites with having built temples to Moloch, in the valley of Hinnom, in Tophet, to burn their children there in the fire. Jer. vii. 31. The same prophet shows that Tophet was a polluted and unclean place, where they used to throw the carcases that they refused burial. Jer. vii. 32. xix. 11, 12, 13. King Josiah defiled the place of Tophet, where the temple of Moloch stood, to prevent the cruel sacrifice. 2 Kings, xxiii. 10. (Ibid. Art. *Tophet*.)

ever attempt to prove, that γεεννα, in the New Testament, has reference to any other place than the valley of Hinnom.

This word is used most frequently by Matthew, who, it is supposed, wrote at Jerusalem, for the benefit of the Hebrew converts. No particular explanation of the word, therefore, was necessary in his gospel.

Mark, who, as it is thought by some, wrote at Alexandria, in Egypt, by others, at Rome, in Italy, explains this, as well as many other words, not explained by Matthew. For many words which were very familiar to the people of Judea, would not be so well understood in those distant countries. Hence, the first time he uses the word *Jordan*, he says the *river* Jordan—*Corban*, he adds, that is to say, a *gift*—with *defiled*, that is to say, with *unwashen* hands; explanations which we do not find in Matthew. See Mark, vii. 2, 11. Mat. xv. 2, 5.

So when he uses the word *gehenna*, he immediately explains it by a passage from Isaiah, lxvi. 24, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." See Mark, ix. 43, 48, inclusive. The explanation, therefore, we should consider as the words of the evangelist, and not as the words of Christ; for there is no such explanation in the parallel text in Matthew. See Mat. v. 29. xviii. 8.* Now turn to the passage in Isaiah, and you will see that the words, *their worm*, evidently alluded to the worms which literally preyed upon "the *carcases* of the men" that transgressed against the Lord, which became an "abhorring unto all flesh." For an explanation of the fire, also, see the preceding note on page 179.

Gehenna is used barely once by Luke, in a parallel text with Matthew, ch. x. 28. "Fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into *gehenna*; yea, I say unto you, fear him." Luke, xii. 5. It is possible that nothing more is meant here than the *judicial authority*; who, for certain crimes, might, not only refuse the body burial, but also, leave them exposed in the valley of Hin-

* See also Dr. Campbell's Preface to the Gospel according to St. Mark.

nom. This undoubtedly was the case with many, whether this passage alludes to it or not. But I have no objection in the supposition that this text is to be understood in a higher sense, and that it refers to the sovereignty of God; who has power, as all will admit, to render any being whom he hath made extinct. He who created man, is able to destroy him in every sense in which he exists as man. Were we to contemplate the *power* of God alone, distinct from his *wisdom* and *goodness*, we might indeed tremble for our existence; for in him we live, move, and have our being: and it would be well for us to feel our dependence on him continually, and never forget, that his power is sufficient to destroy both soul and body, not only in *Gehenna*, but in any other place whatever. But a faith in the *power* of God, aside from his *wisdom* and *love*, is no better than the "faith of devils." For the devils also "believe and tremble."* But to proceed,

Gehenna is invariably rendered *Gehenna*, in the Latin Testament; that is, the original word is retained: and no good reason can be offered why it should not have been so rendered, in the English, as it comes from the Hebrew גיהנם *Gehinnom*, and originally was the name of a place, as much so as either Sodom or Gomorrah. And if our Saviour had spoken of the fire of Sodom, in the same sense as he did of the fire of *Gehenna*, there is no doubt but that it would have been rendered HELL, by those who translated our common Bible. For the doctrine of the schools teaches, that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are still suffering in the fire of hell. Why? Only because Jude says, they were "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of πυρος αιωνιου, *aionian fire*." Nevertheless, it is very evident, that no other fire was alluded to than the fire by which those cities were destroyed; which fire, it is said from good authority, "lasted upwards of 2,000 years;" (and of

* Because God has power to destroy, it does not necessarily follow that he will. He has power "of these stones to raise up children to Abraham;" but we have no account that he ever did, or that he ever said that he would. See Mat. iii. 9.

course was burning in the days of the apostles;) "but is now extinct."*

If, therefore, *gehenna* had only retained its original meaning in the English Testament, as it does in the Latin, who would have ever thought that it had any allusion to a place of suffering in another world? Only let it have been understood that it alluded to the *valley of Hinnom*, and the idea would have terminated there, whenever it should have been either read or spoken, as its *ne plus ultra*; for no further could it have been extended; the same as the mind now terminates on mount *Sinai*, whenever any one speaks (by way of figure) of the "*thunderings of the law.*"

If it can be proved that the word *gehenna* was in use, and was understood to represent a state of torment, or suffering after death, before *that* name was given to *Tophet*, or that place, whatever it might have been called before; and that this valley was named גיהנם i. e. *Gehenna*, in consequence of the wickedness of the people, or the horrid idea of the place; then, it will be admitted, that the word still retains its original meaning, notwithstanding it was given as a name to that wicked place. But if this word *originally* signified, either the place or state of the damned, after death, why is it not so used in the Old Testament? This is a question which cannot be answered. The original meaning of the word, in Hebrew, is, "*there they are.*"† (See Bible Dictionary.) How applicable, then, was the name *Hinnom*, to that place! "There they are!" There what are? The carcases of those that were refused burial. "For they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place; and the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away." (Jer. vii. 32, 33.) But how could "there they are," mean a place of future torments af-

* "This fire lasted from Abraham's time till after the apostolic age; and was burning in the time of Philo Judæus, the beginning of the second century." Whitby: as quoted by Scarlett in his translation of the New Testament.

† Or, "their shrieking." Brown's Dict.

ter death? And this was simply the meaning of the word הנם *hinnom*, before it was given as a name to that place.*

Presuming that the reader, by this time, must be satisfied, if satisfaction he can have, that the word *gehenna*, rendered *hell*, in the New Testament, cannot mean a place or state of suffering after death, but only a place (rendered awful and horrid, indeed, by a variety of circumstances, and on that account) called *the valley of Hinnom;* we shall therefore dismiss this word, and consider one more, which is used but once in all the Bible, and that by Peter, and which is rendered hell in the translation.

2 Peter, ii. 4. "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down ταρταρωσας, to *tartarus—hell*, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," &c. The word here rendered *hell*, is *tartarus*, in the Latin; that is, like *Gehenna*, the *original* word is retained, only with a Latin termination; and both this word and Gehenna are also retained in SCARLETT'S translation of the New Testament. *Tartarus* signifies about the same as *hades*, excepting where *hades* is to be understood, literally, the *grave*.

The apostle Peter perhaps gives us as good an explanation as we can have of this word. They were delivered into "chains of darkness," which gives us an idea of *tartarus*.† But where is *tartarus?* And who

* See the explanation of Hebrew names in all great Bibles.

† Ταρταρου, *Tartarus, inferi, carcer, locus tenebricosus—hell*, the shades below, a prison, a very dark place.

"The word is used by the Greek poets, from whom it seems to be borrowed; it cannot be referred to such a world as the popular notion of hell supposes; but rather to a (supposed) region under ground.—Josephus, in his discourse concerning *Hades*, speaks of it, not as a distinct world, but as a subterraneous region; and it is likely his opinion was the same as the Jews in general entertained at that time:—To what part of the universe will you look for such a world as the modern hell, whose elements are fire and flame, the habitation of none but creatures totally abandoned of God; where infinite wrath perpetually abides; where nothing can be felt but inexpressible torments; nor heard but incessant groans and curses to all eternity? To what part of space can you turn your eyes, where wisdom and

are the angels that sinned? Take your Bible and turn to Revelation, xii. 7, 12, and you will find that the dragon and his angels fought with Michael and his angels, and prevailed not; and that the dragon, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, was cast out into the *earth*, and his angels were cast out with him. "Woe unto the inhabiters of the *earth* and of the *sea!* for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time." The angels that sinned were cast down to *tartarus;* and the devil and his angels were cast out into the *earth*, filled with great wrath, being able to deceive the world but a short time. But it will be perceived that the language, i. e. the *chains of darkness*, &c. is figurative; and that the *dragon* and his *angels*, &c. are metaphorical beings. They probably represent different powers in the world; but I understand the real actors to be men.

The word *angel* is synonymous with *messenger*, and is the same word in the original. "For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my αγελος, *angel*, before thy

goodness are not displayed? Where hath God given existence, and not provided enjoyment? Where, in the whole creation, does not his mercy smile? Where does not bounty flow? Is he not good to all? are not his tender mercies over all his works? The existence of such a world [as the supposed hell] would be an anomaly in creation; it would not only be different from, but contrary to, every thing that visibly appears; and could never be reconciled with the character and perfections of God." See Wright's Unitarian Missionary Discourses, p. 318—320.

"*If God spared not the messengers who had sinned*, i. e. the spies who were sent to explore the land of Canaan, &c. See Simpson's Essays, p. 205, &c. But if the common interpretation be admitted, it will not establish the popular doctrine concerning fallen angels. For, 1. The epistle itself is of doubtful authority. 2. From the change of style, this is the most doubtful portion of the epistle. 3. By those who admit the genuineness of the epistle, this chapter is supposed to have been a quotation from some ancient apocryphal book, and the apostle might not mean to give authority to the doctrine, but to argue with his readers upon known and allowed principles. See Sherlock's Discourses, and Benson and Doddridge's Introduction to this epistle. The epistle of Jude is supposed to allude to, or to quote from, the same apocryphal work." See the Improved Version of the New Testament, note on the place.

face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." See Mat. xi. 10. Mark, i. 2. Luke, vii. 27, in all of which places the word in the original is ἀγγελος, the same that is rendered *angel* throughout the Bible; and yet we know that none other than John the Baptist is meant. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained *angels* unawares." (Heb. xiii. 2.) The above passages are not designed to prove that by *angels*, we must necessarily understand *men*, but only, that it is possible, that *men* might have been meant. But whether, that by *angels*, we are to understand *celestial* or *terrestrial* beings, it is pretty evident that the darkness of *tartarus* cannot be much more distressing than that which David felt when he was made to cry out in the bitterness of his soul, "the pains of *hell* gat hold on me;" or that which Jonah felt, when he "cried unto the Lord out of the belly of *hell;*" and the Lord heard him. Or, to say all in one word, "the lowest hell," from which David's soul found deliverance, must have been equal to each and every idea of hell which we have yet been able to find.

There is a word used in the Apocalypse, which is rendered *bottomless pit;* though in every place, except Rev. ix. 1, 2, the word *pit* is not in the *original.* It is the same that is used in the Septuagint, Gen. i. 2, which is there rendered *deep.* The word is ἄβυσσος, from which comes the English word *abyss;* which gives us an idea as near perhaps to the *original*, as any that could be coined. Like *tartarus*, it is an imaginary place of *darkness.* In this *abyss*, the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, is to be confined a *thousand years.* It appears that this *infinitæ profunditatis vorago*, or *incomprehensible gulf*, is not altogether destitute of inhabitants: as we read of living creatures, such as *beasts, locusts*, &c. coming out of it, and particularly the *beast* that was, and is not, and yet is, shall ascend out of this *region of darkness*, and go into *perdition.** The next

* "By ἄβυσσος having been translated *bottomless pit*, a false idea is almost necessarily communicated to the mind of the reader:—its

doom of the "old serpent," after that he shall have been loosed from the "bottomless pit," is in the "lake of fire,"* where the "beast and false prophet are." But whether they have any thing which can endure these "everlasting burnings," time alone will determine. If they have any of the pure *gold* of the kingdom, though it may now be *lost* in ever so much *alloy* or earthy substance, yet the fire will search it out, and it will remain; but, on the other hand, if these metaphorical beings contain nothing but what is a complete negation to all that is good, and are, in the strictest sense, destined to *perdition*, then we know their doom, for the *devil* and all his works must be *destroyed*. Heb. ii. 4. 1 John, iii. 8.

No more, therefore, need be said concerning *hell*, or the supposed place of the future and never ending punishment of the wicked; as it is now made plain to the understanding, and as clear as light, that no evidence can be gathered from the scriptures of any place of future punishment, where the soul will endure any thing more than that which has been felt, by some, in this life.

How can a being which is altogether *spiritual*, suffer *natural* pain? The idea of such a being's suffering in a lake of fire burning with brimstone, *literally*, we need not hesitate to say, is all *vain imagination*: and can be nothing more than a mere *bug-bear*, got up to frighten *grown children!*

signification in scripture, as Suidas and Theodoret observe, is *a great mass of waters*; a sense annexed to the word by the most approved lexicographers, by Hesychius, Constantine, and Suicerus." Dr. Towers on Prophecy, vol. i. ch. vii. p. 77, note 16.

"Dr. Lancaster," as quoted by Dr. T. says, "In Is. xliv. 27, what in the LXX is *abyss*, is in the Hebrew *deep*, that is, the great sea;" and Dr. More, in correspondence with this, remarks, that ἄβυσσος, in Rev. xi. 7, might very properly have been translated *the sea*. *Myst. of Godliness*, p. 178."

"To prove that ἄβυσσος, as well as θαλασσα, (*the sea*,) signifies in the symbolic language multitudes in *motion and disorder*, ch. vii. 4, of the prophet Amos, may be appealed to, where (I am speaking of the Septuagint) ἄβυσσος is employed as an emblem of the Jewish nation in a state of confusion." *Ib.* p. 77, note 17.

* By the *lake of fire*, it is very probable the lake of Sodom was alluded to, which it seems was then burning. See the note on page 182.

In a literal sense, the dark and silent mansion of the dead—the burning alive, or the exposing of the *carcase* unburied, in the valley of Hinnom—or a sudden death, like the destruction of the Sodomites by fire from heaven—is all that the scriptures of divine truth mean by *hell:* or by any word so rendered in our common translation of the Bible. Again: When the soul, weighed down under a sense of its own sin and wretchedness, and, seeing no possible deliverance, sinks into a state of despondency—this is HELL!—even in the most awful sense in which the word ἅδης is any where used in the Bible: and this is undoubtedly what David felt, which made him cry out, in anguish, *The pains of* HELL *gat hold on me!*

But let the light of divine truth burst in upon the understanding, and the soul is saved from sin and all its condemning powers; and thus the powers of *hell* and *death* are destroyed!

2. Having diligently sought for the place of the damned after death, and not being able to find it, we shall in the next place, consider the nature of this supposed never ceasing punishment: viz. DAMNATION!

There are two words in the *original,* which are rendered, indiscriminately, *judgment,* or *damnation.* They appear to be about, or quite, synonymous; and may be used in many different senses: as will be seen in the definitions taken from the Greek Lexicon, and given in the note below.*

Notwithstanding these words are of such extensive signification, yet they are generally translated in the New Testament, either *judgment* or *damnation;* and very frequently the latter. They are sometimes, however, rendered *condemnation.* The words rendered *condemn, condemned,* and *damned,* are from the same *root,* and are equally synonymous.

* The Greek words are κριμα and κρισις.

Κριμα, judicium, pœna, damnatio, vindicta, decretum.

Κρισις, judicatio, sententia, æstimatio alicujus rei, damnatio, accusatio, disceptatio, judicium, eventus belli.

The sense of these words, therefore, can only be determined by the nature of the sentence; for they might have been used in all senses, from *sententia*, (a bare simple opinion,) up to that of *damnatio*, (condemnation.) See the note on the preceding page.

Christ saith, (John, ix. 39,) "*For judgment*, εἰς κρίμα, I am come into the world; that they which see not, might see, and that they which see might be made blind."

Here κρίμα, *krima*, is used, which is most generally rendered *damnation*; but how would it answer to read, *For damnation I am come into the world?* This would not do; for we are elsewhere informed, that he came not to *condemn* the world, but that the world through him might be saved. See John, iii. 17.

1 Pet. iv. 17. "For the time is come that *krima—judgment* must begin at the house of God." Here is the same word again; and the same that is rendered *damnation*, Mat. xxiii. 14. Rom. viii. 3. xiii. 2; and yet, this *krima—damnation* must begin at the house of God.

Jude, 14, 15. "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute κρίσις—*krisis—judgment* upon all," &c. No one would be willing to have it read *to execute damnation upon all*; but it is the same word that Christ uses, when he saith, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the *damnation* of *Gehenna?*" Mat. xxiii. 33.

It is admitted, however, that these words may mean *condemnation*; such as is the necessary consequence of sin: even sin against light and the dictates of a good understanding, as the blasphemy against the holy spirit, which hath not forgiveness; but he who committeth this sin will be subject to *continual condemnation*; that is, as long as he continues to resist the light; for the condemnation will continue as long as the sinner continues in this sin, let that be longer or shorter. But as for either of these words, they neither do, nor can, represent a punishment without end; and such an idea, as predicated on either, can only exist in the chimera of the human art; for such a definition is not to be found in any lexicon of the Greek language. The word απωλεια,

which is generally rendered *perdition*, or *destruction*, is once rendered *damnation*.

2 Pet. ii. 3. "Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their απωλεια—*damnation* slumbereth not." This is the same word that is rendered destruction in verse 1st. "And bring upon themselves swift απωλειαν—*destruction*." But this word is generally rendered *perdition*; as in John, xvii. 12. Phil. i. 23. 2 Thes. ii. 3. 1 Tim. vi. 9. Heb. x. 39. 2 Pet. iii. 7. Rev. xvii. 8, 11.

The word which is the most pointed and definite for *damnation*, of any in the Greek Lexicon, is κατακριμα, which is rendered *damnatio—condemnation*, and that only. But this word I have not been able to find in the scriptures; and even if it were there, it would prove nothing more than a *condemnation* for sin, which is admitted as a fact; from which nothing can deliver man but a knowledge of, or, at least, a belief in, the truth; and this condemnation may be understood either from *krima* or *krisis*, though these words are more loose in their signification. They do not necessarily convey an idea of suffering in another world. See John, iii. 19. The word in the Greek is κρισις, the same as in Mat. xxiii. 33.

3. Having, therefore, reduced the nature of punishment down to the standard (as is conceived) of divine truth, we come thirdly to speak of its *duration*.

And here the enemy will level all his artillery, for having knocked away the first pillar, and greatly weakened the second; if this falls, the whole fabric of the doctrine of ENDLESS MISERY goes with it.

As to the duration of punishment, it is confessed, by our opponents themselves, that the doctrine of *unlimited punishment* rests on certain *equivocal terms*, which are rather indefinite in their signification; that is, the words, expressive of the duration of punishment, are, sometimes at least, used in a limited sense.

This fact is so well known, that it will not be disputed. But we shall be able to prove something more; that is, that these words do not, in any instance, necessarily convey an idea of *eternity*; nor yet, an *endless duration of time*.

That these words are connected with God, we admit. But then, HE who "inhabiteth eternity," is also the "ROCK of ages;" and his kingdom is a "kingdom of all ages." Isa. xxvi. 4. Psal. cxlv. 13. He who is strictly eternal, must certainly live through all times; and therefore there is no impropriety in applying an indefinite word to him, expressive of duration, though the word should not, in itself, be strictly eternal.

To show that these words are strictly limited, in themselves, nothing more is necessary than to show that the substantive, or *root*, is used in the plural as well as in the singular number. For every *school-boy*, who has paid any attention to his grammar, knows that a *noun* or substantive, expressive of time, which is used in the *plural* number, cannot give an idea of duration without end; but must be a period that has both beginning and end; otherwise there could be but one of the kind. And this is the case in all languages, as well as the English.

Let us now attend to the words in dispute.

"The word αιων, as a substantive, occurs 128 times in the Greek Testament; 66 times in the singular, and 62 in the plural number. In our common translation it is rendered 72 times *ever*; twice *eternal*; 36 times *world*; seven times *never*; three times *evermore*; twice *worlds*; twice *ages*; once *course*; once *world without end*; and twice it is passed over without any word affixed as a translation of it."

Thus it will be seen, that no attention has been paid to the singular or plural form of the word; nor but very little distinction between the substantive and adjective. The word αιων always has reference to periods of time; therefore rendering αιων by *world* or *worlds*, cannot with propriety be admitted. The word signifies, literally, an *age* or (pl.) *ages*. The following texts, in *Scarlett's* translation, are thus rendered: Former ages, (Col. i. 26,) the present age, (Mat. xii. 32,) the approaching age, (Mark, x. 30,) ages to come, (Eph. ii. 7,) the consummation of the age, (Mat. xxviii. 20,) the ends of the ages, (1 Cor. x. 11,) all of which prove that αιων doth not mean eternity.

Eternity can be but one; and implies an unity of consistency, and simple continuance. But it is possible that some of these *ages* may be of short, others of long duration; and some interwoven with others. The mediatorial age commenced with the mediatorial kingdom of Christ; and will continue till *he hath subdued all things,* (1 Cor. xv. 23, 29,) *and made all things new,* (Rev. xxi. 5,) *and every curse has ceased,* (Rev. xxii. 3,) *then will he deliver up* (the subdued and reconciled subjects called) *the kingdom to his Father, that God may be all things in all,* (1 Cor. xv. 28.) The scripture doth not carry us beyond that period; therefore, with the poet, we ought to say,

> "Here stop my soul, no further seek to go;
> "What God reveals, is quite enough to know."

But notwithstanding, from what has been already stated, it must now be admitted that the word αιων does not, neither can, signify *eternity,* nor yet an *endless duration of time;* yet, nevertheless, it may be still thought, by some, that the word αιωνιον does; or, at least, that it may be so construed.

In *Scarlett's* translation of the New Testament, the adjective αιωνιον is retained; that is, (except in Rom. xvi. 25, where the words, translated *former ages,* should have been rendered *œonian times,*) it is invariably rendered *œonian* in the translation. The reason he gives for this is, "because there is no word in the English language which fully expresses what that word in its original sense implies. Had it been lawful to have coined a new word to express αιωνιον in English, perhaps *agical,* or *age-lasting,* would have been near it."

The following (with a little variation, as well as the foregoing quotations, under the word αιων) are his *Editorial Remarks* on this subject.

"The word αιωνιον, as an adjective, occurs 71 times in the New Testament. The common translation has rendered it once *ever,* 42 times *eternal,* 3 times *world,* and 25 times *everlasting.*

"The word αιωνιον expresses duration or continuance;

but it is sometimes of a short, and at other times of a longer duration. Paul, writing to Philemon concerning Onesimus, says, 'Perhaps he was separated for a while, that thou mightest have him *œonianly*.' This certainly could mean only during the life of Onesimus.

"So also Jude (7,) says, 'Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, and set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of *œonian fire*.' Though this fire lasted upwards of 2,000 years, it is now extinct." See note on page 182.

"But that αιωνιον does not mean endless or eternal, may appear from considering that no adjective can have a greater force than the substantive from which it is derived: thus *black* cannot mean more than *blackness*; *white* cannot mean more than *whiteness*."

That αιωνιον cannot mean more than αιων, will more fully appear from considering the adjective *great*, which cannot mean more than *greatness*; and yet *great* may sometimes be *more*, and sometimes *less*, according to that to which it is applied; but never can, of itself, mean strictly *infinite*; notwithstanding we say, "The great *Jehovah*," for Jehovah, who is *infinite*, must necessarily be *great*; yet, it does not necessarily follow that *great* must, with equal necessity, mean *infinite* when applied to God. The adjective *great*, as expressive of magnitude, is as near to the Greek word αιωνιον, as expressive of duration, as any perhaps in our language. Yet we say, a great *apple*, a great *ox*, a great *house*, a great *mountain*, and also, "*the great God*;" (Rev. xix. 17;) in all of which cases, except the latter, those things are only comparatively great, as standing in relation to others of the same kind—while God is definitely, *the great and mighty ONE*, with whom there can be no comparison. Therefore,

"If αιων means *age*, and its plural *ages*, (which none either will or can deny,) then αιωνιον must mean *age lasting*, or duration to the *age* or *ages*, to which the thing spoken of relates. That this is the meaning of the word in the Septuagint, will not be disputed by any one that recollects the *everlasting* covenant of circumcision made

with Abraham: (Gen. vii. 13:) The *everlasting* covenant of priesthood with Phineas: (Num. xxv. 13:) The *everlasting* statute of the day of atonement: (Lev. xvi. 34:) &c. &c.

"It would be a contradiction both to scripture and common sense, to ascribe eternity to those things merely because they are said to be of αἰωνιον duration: for it is evident that the αἰων, or *age*, to which all these things related, is experienced and gone: the αἰωνιον covenants and statutes, &c. are waxed old, and have vanished away.

"When the reader meets with the phrase *œonian God*, (that is, in Scarlett's translation, or with the *eternal God*, in the common translation of the Bible,) he will understand thereby that God reigns through all the *œons*, or *ages*, whether past, present, or to come: and *œonian spirit* is the *spirit of God*, which has presided over the church in all *ages* or *œons*."

"*Æonian life*, in the largest view of it, is the life which *God hath given us in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unblameable before him in love.* (1 John, v. 11. Eph. i. 4:) Or the life which is conveyed from Christ to all the sons of men in the course of the *ages* of his reign. (Rom. v. 12, 21. vi. 23.) But in its more confined sense *œonian life* is the life of the believer in the present, or *millennial age*, which is the peculiar portion of God's first born, or church, and which they alone enjoy." Mat. xxv. 34, 46.

Æonian fire, (Mat. xviii. 8, 25, 41,) literally undoubtedly alluded to the fire of Sodom, (Jude, 7,) as the fire of hell literally alluded to the fire of Hinnom; but, figuratively, it represents the same as the *œonian punishment*: (Mat. xxv. 46. Mark, iii. 29:) i. e. the tormenting fears which the wicked and the unbelieving suffer, will be to their souls like the anguish or pain of fire is to the body; and this the fearful and the unbelieving endure, while the first fruits unto holiness are reigning with Christ and rejoicing in the glory of his kingdom.

"*Æonian judgment*, in Heb. vi. 3, the Editor (Scarlett) thinks is the judgment of the Aaronic *œon* or *age*

which is past, under which the priests gave judgment according to the law. See Lev. xiii. 13. Numb. v. 15, 16. Exod. xxviii. 30. *Æonian gospel* is the good news of reconciliation to God, through Christ; which will continue to be preached through the *æons*, until every creature, whether in heaven or on earth, visible or invisible, is reconciled to God. (Col. i. 16—21.) And then the promulgation of the *æonian gospel* will cease. And as there was a period when the *æons* began, so a period will come when they all will have an end: when the work is finished, when all things shall be restored to holiness and happiness. Then, "*every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, even all that are in them will sing, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, to the ages of ages.*"

"What a rapturous song,
When the glorified throng,
In the spirit of melody joins?
Join all the glad choirs,
Hearts, voices, and lyres,
And the burden is *mercy divine.*"

It is possible, after all, that there may be new *æons* or *ages*, introduced in eternity; like glory rising on glory, wisdom transcending present manifestations of wisdom, and love superabounding any thing of which the heart can at present conceive, which have not yet been revealed to man. But here our contemplation is lost in the immensity of the thought. Who knows but that the time will come when we shall be able to look back upon all the *æons* which we now have any idea of, as we now look back upon the *æonian covenant* of circumcision, which has long since been abolished?

Is it necessary to say any thing more under this head? More indeed might be said, although it seems that what has been said ought to be sufficient.

We will, however, attend to a few passages more. There is a very striking passage on this subject in Paul's epistle to Titus, (i. 2,) which stands in Scarlett's trans-

lation thus: "In hope of *œonian life*, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the *œonian times*, but hath in his own times made his word public, through the preaching, with which I am intrusted, according to the commandment of God our Saviour." The phrase *œonian times*, (πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων,) in our common translation, is rendered *before the world began*. The *œonian times* had a beginning, and the promise of *œonian life* in Christ was *anterior* to all of them. Again: Christ saith to his disciples, (Mat. xxviii. 20,) "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, *the consummation of the age*;" or, as the common translation reads, *the end of the world*. Could Christ possibly mean the end of *eternity*? No. Eternity can have no end. Luke, i. 70. "As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets since the (αἰῶνος) *age* or *world* began. See also Acts, iii. 21.

Thus we read of, before the beginning of those periods, the beginning of them, the end of them, and of the same periods, yet to come. See Eph. ii. 7, where the words ἐνδείξηται ἐν τοῖς αἰῶσι are rendered *in the ages to come*.

If αἰων signifies *eternity*, then the phrase εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων, (Rev. xiv. 11,) should have been rendered to *eternities of eternities!* and εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, (ch. xx. 10,) should have been rendered *to the eternity of the eternities*. If the word *age* signified the same as *eternity*, then *ages of ages* could signify no more than simply *age*. But if αἰων, or *age*, does not mean *eternity*, then making it plural, and repeating it ever so many times over, does not, after all, make out the idea of *eternity*, nor yet an *endless duration* of time.*

* If it be asked, whether the same words do not mean eternity, Rev. xi. 15, ("and *he* shall reign *for ever and ever*,") I would answer: If *he* refer to Christ, as its antecedent, it is only necessary to compare the text with 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28, which will fully give an answer; but if the pronoun *he* refer to our LORD, (which, in the text, means GOD, the Father), then the words will admit of an unlimited construction. But, in Rev. xv. 7, ("God, who liveth *for ever and ever*,") it is admitted, the words must be construed in an unlimited sense; on the same principle that *great* means *infinite* in chap. xix. 17, i. e. admitting that the *great God* means the same as God omnipotent, in ver. 6,

Although it appears that the foregoing statements must be considered not only conclusive, but convincing, yet perhaps the reader may still object, and say, that, from aught which has yet appeared, the inspired writers had no other word by which they could convey the idea of an *endless duration*, and hence the doctrine of *endless misery* may be true, notwithstanding all that has yet been said to the contrary.

We are glad to have the above objection started, because it is so easily answered. Speaking of our great High Priest, who was made priest, by an oath, after the order of Melchisedec, and not after the order of Aaron, St. Paul saith, (Heb. vii. 16,) "who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an *endless life*," (αλλα κατα δυναμιν ζωης ακαταλυτου,) *but according to the power* (ακαταλυτου) of indissoluble *life*. Here is a word in the original, which is not connected with *punishment*, *misery*, or *death*, any where in the whole Bible; yet it is connected with *life*, to denote its durability. If this word could have been so much as once found connected with *death*, in the same manner as it is here connected with *life*, it would have given more support to the doctrine of *endless misery* than all that is contained in the Bible besides. Is it not strange, if St. Paul believed in this unmerciful doctrine, that he did not so much as once, in all his writings, connect this word with *punishment* or *death*? But, instead of this, he has not connected αιωνιον with *punishment* but once in all his writings, notwithstanding they form so great a part of the New Testament. And it may be observed that he connects the word with the instrument of punishment, and not with punishment itself. See 2 Thes. i. 9. "Who shall be punished with *everlasting destruction*," &c. This may be considered the same as suffering the vengeance of αιωνιον *fire*; (Jude, 7;) but he does not say how long they shall be thus punished: we have reason to suppose,

or Almighty God, ver. 15; but if it be the same that is called Faithful and True, ver. 11, or the Word of God, ver. 13, then *great*, after all, is not *infinite*—unless you are prepared to say, that the *infinite Jehovah* was seen riding upon a *white horse!* ver. 11.

however, that they will be punished until the *destruction* intended, is complete.

It is surprising that the advocates of the doctrine of *endless misery* do not see that they make justice require something which it can never have; for *endless misery*, even admitting the doctrine true, never was yet, nor ever can be inflicted. When the sinner has suffered the torments of hell ever so long, even millions of millions of years, his sufferings are no nearer being at an end; and of course justice, on this principle, is no nearer being satisfied. Again: According to this doctrine, two persons may live together ever so long in the world, say fifty years, equally good, or equally bad, as it respects their moral characters; both born under the same roof, and in the same hour, and both die (perhaps killed) in the same instant; yet in consequence of one's being converted and regenerated, say one hour before death, and the other not, one goes to eternal glory, and the other to never ending torments; and yet, the doctrine of *endless misery* would argue, that they are both rewarded according to the deeds done in the body. Now, ye advocates for the doctrine of this horrid, this abominable, this cruel and unmerciful punishment, look at this picture! Say not that the lines are drawn too straight; you must admit the possibility of the case, or else give up your system!

If the doctrine of *endless misery* were a truth, might we not naturally suppose that the apostles would have urged the matter in all their preaching, and have set it forth in the plainest and strongest terms? That they would have considered it, if not equal, at least, next of importance, to a belief in the *Saviour*, or the doctrine of the *resurrection*. Instead of which, it is not to be met with, even in an *aionian* sense, in the gospels of either Luke or John; nor in either of the three epistles of John. It no where occurs in the epistles of Peter or James. And what is still more remarkable, in all the account we have of the preaching of the apostles, in the book of Acts, there is a *silence*, a *total silence*, as it respects this matter.

We will attend to one query more, and then dismiss this article. Does not Christ mean to represent the punishment of the wicked as *endless*, when he sets it in contrast with *eternal life?* "These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment, but the righteous into *life eternal.*" Mat. xxv. 46.

In answer to the above, it will be only necessary to observe a very few words in this place.

First. From what has been before stated, it will be seen that we are not under the necessity of construing the *life* here spoken of as strictly *endless;* but rather the life of the Christian, in the kingdom of Christ, as a certain consequence of his faith and good works. "*For* I was hungry, and ye gave me meat, &c.—and in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Let it not be supposed that the fulfilment of all this must be in another world. See Mat. xvi. 27, 28. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." This undoubtedly alludes to the same time as the passage under consideration; and yet the time or *age* of the kingdom was to commence in the life time of some of those present. Thus the *aionian life*, here spoken of, may, as has been before stated, be considered in a limited sense; for the believer will pass from this *aoinian life* to the ακαταλυτον (*indissoluble*) *life and immortality* given him in eternity.

Secondly. But if we are to understand *eternal life* here to be strictly *endless;* yet there is no necessity, from the word, of understanding the punishment to be so too. For there are two other passages in the New Testament, in each of which *aionian* is twice used, but both of them cannot, by any one, be understood strictly *endless;* and therefore one of them, in each sentence, is rendered in the common translation, *world.* Rom. xvi. 25, 26. "According to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept *secret since the aionian* began, but now is made manifest,

and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the *aionian* God." See also Tit. i. 2. "In hope of *aionian* life, which God that cannot lie promised before the *aionian* began." Compare the above passages with the same passages in our common Bible, and it will be obvious, even to the smallest capacity, that the word *aionian* must be differently construed; and has been so construed, even in the same sentence. But the objector may still say, that, in the two passages above, the form of the sentence limits one *aionian;* that is, the words *since* and *before,* limiting it as to a beginning, but this does not show that it will have an end, any more than *aionian life,* or the *aionian God.* Be it so. But we have before proved that these indefinite periods of duration not only may, but many of them certainly have had, and we have good reason to suppose, that all of them will have, an end. Life, indeed, will continue, not because it is *aionian,* but because it is "hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 3.) *Sinners* having passed from death unto life, "*shall not die any more; death shall have no more power upon them,*" &c. Whereas, on the other hand, *death* shall be *abolished; transgression* shall be *finished;* and an *end* made to *sins;* and *death,* the last enemy, shall be *destroyed.* Luke xx. 36. Rev. xx. 6. 2 Tim. i. 10. Dan. ix. 24. 1 Cor. xv. 26.*

Thus falls the third and main pillar of the strangely popular, yet cruel and unmerciful, doctrine of *endless misery;* and the whole fabric must now crumble into the dust.

4. The fourth and last pillar to this cruel antichristian doctrine, is the *anger, wrath,* and even supposed *hatred* of God towards his children, or creatures, the workmanship of his own hands. But having framed the awful scheme, it was necessary to find some principle in the

* "Αιων, *always being.* It denotes duration, or continuance of time, but with great variety—1. Eternity; (this is doubted)—2. The duration of the world—3. The ages of the world—4. This present life—5. The world to come; the next life—6. An age, period, or periodical dispensation of divine providence." See Parkhurst's Greek Lex. under this word.

Deity that would carry it into effect. Hence the doctrine of antichrist has set God at war against his own offspring, and represents him as pursuing a great part of them, like a merciless tyrant, with implacable hatred; determined to wreak his vengeance upon them, without the least show of pity or compassion; but will ultimately make them indescribably miserable, through the endless ages of eternity.

It is not at all surprising, that the doctrine of Antichrist should associate all the character of the ferocious "beast" with that of the God who is to be worshipped by its votaries. For unless the "beast" bore the appellation of *God*, among his worshippers, and *Antichrist* also was considered as the *true Christ*, neither the one nor the other would be worshipped at all. Therefore, let no one suppose that we have aught against these deceived worshippers. No, we feel for them both *pity* and *compassion;* and consider that we shall be doing them the greatest possible *kindness*, by pointing out to them the cruelty of their *God*, and the abomination of all such *worship*. In the fear of that GOD who created the heavens and the earth, let it be spoken; and in the love of all men, as the offspring of God, let it be recorded—that, (in the opinion of the writer, which opinion is founded on the evidence herein adduced,) all *the doctrines of men*, (embracing every sentiment, tenet, or denomination,) *which limit the grace of God to a part of the sinful race of man, are but the unchaste children of her who sitteth upon a "scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns; and upon her forehead is a name written, mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth!"* Before the anger shall rise so high in the breast of the reader, as to induce him to break off and read no further, he is requested to take his Bible and read attentively the Revelation, from the 16th to the 20th chapters, inclusive; and consider well who is there pointed out by the "beast," and also by the "*great whore that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication.*" Consider, also, at the same time, how natural

it must have been for "*the Most High and Mighty Prince JAMES, by the Grace of God King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith,*" &c. (according to the pompous title he bore, under whose inspection our common Bible was translated,) to introduce, if possible, such kind of *faith* as would keep his subjects in the greatest fear imaginable, that with the more ease he might support his *Crown;* i. e. by making the *monarchical* and *ecclesiastical* powers unite and combine together; I say, let these things be well considered, and neither the literal nor the mystical Babylon can easily be mistaken. Yet, rest assured, "her plagues shall come in one day;" and none will either *mourn* or *bewail* her just *judgment,* although accompanied with great *torments,* except it be those who have made themselves rich by her *merchandise,* or who have "drank of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."—O, ye children of mystical *Babylon,* hearken, and be wise; "Come out of her, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues!"

The idea that God is filled with either *wrath, anger,* or *hatred,* towards any of his creatures, which the doctrine of *endless misery* supposes, is as contrary and foreign from the truth, as darkness is from light. It would be as consistent to suppose that our natural *sun* is capable of emitting *cold* and *darkness,* as it is to suppose that GOD is even *subject* to anger; that is, to any principle which is inconsistent with, or opposed to, his own divine nature—LOVE. To say that God now hates any thing which he once loved, supposes a change in the Deity; which is not only inconsistent, but contrary to scripture. Whatever we can suppose, as now existing in man, whether natural pollution or actual transgression, which renders him obnoxious to the wrath of the Deity, must have been foreseen by him who seeth the end from the beginning, and therefore must have had the same effect in his mind, even before creation, that it has now, or ever can have; and if these things render man an object of hatred *now,* why did they not render him an object of hatred from the *beginning?* Therefore, if there be any

such thing as hatred in God *now*, that hatred was there from *eternity*, and was exercised towards the same objects that it is now, the very first moment those objects had a being; and no other principle has ever been exercised towards them, from that moment to the present, (from the same source,) but a principle of *hatred!* To clear the scriptures of divine truth from ideas so derogatory to the character of God, and to deliver the world from a doctrine so blasphemous in its nature, and pernicious in its consequences, nothing more is necessary than barely to define the word ὀργη, which is the only word used in connexion with God, that is rendered *wrath* or *anger*. in the Greek Testament. Ὀργη, *animi inclinatio*, an inclination of the mind or spirit; *studium*, an earnest endeavour after any thing, study, care, regard, concern, purpose, design, exercise, &c.

Now such being the definition of the Greek word ὀργη, as well as *ira*, anger, wrath, &c. there certainly was no necessity (and I doubt the propriety) of ever rendering the word *wrath* or *anger*, when applied to the Deity. When applied to man, it is admitted that ὀργη may represent the passion of *anger, wrath, displeasure*, &c. Why? Not because the word necessarily means so, but because man is subject to those passions: his mind may be so exercised as to be blown into a rage, or be inflamed with anger. But shall we say that God is subject to the like passions as we are? This would be contradicting other plain and positive texts of scripture. "Fury is not in me." Isa. xxvii. 4. "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Mal. iii. 6. But we should have no objection to the words *wrath* and *anger*, as applied to God, only let them be understood in a qualified sense, as *in appearance only*, and not representing a principle inconsistent with, and contradictory to, the nature of the Deity, which is LOVE. Therefore, when we read, "God is angry with the wicked every day;" and also read, that "anger resteth in the bosom of fools;" we cannot construe *anger*, in both passages, in the same sense; as all would be shocked at the character such a construction gives the Almighty,

If the word ὀργη had been invariably translated *ardour*, when applied to God, it would, I make no doubt, have come nearer the sense of the original.

Thus we may see what is meant to be understood in scripture by the *wrath of God*, or the *anger of the Lord*. It is that fervency of spirit in the *Most High*, which shall burn as an oven, when the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: "and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Mal. iv. 1.

Rom. i. 18, "For ὀργη Θεου, *the ardour* of God*, is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, των την ἀληθειαν ἐν ἀδικια κατεχοντων, veritatim in injustitia detinentium, *who suppress the truth by injustice.*" The above passage contains the best comment on the *wrath*, *ardour*, or *fervency* of God, which can be given. It is that energetic principle which will ultimately destroy every thing that stands opposed to his divine nature.

We might here, as it should seem, take leave of this work, believing that all, into whose hands it may fall, must be convinced of the truth of the doctrine which has been advocated—and being so convinced, see that the doctrine of *endless misery* is a sentiment which cannot be supported by the Bible:—But so far from believing that it will have all that good effect, which, but for the prejudices of mankind, it would seem as though it might, and ought to have; it is expected, after all, that but very few, comparatively, will even give it a candid perusal; and a much less number will suffer themselves to be convinced by it, although it should not be in their power to show wherein it is incorrect. In the first place, there are too many who, like Gallio of old, "care for none of these

* The learned reader, perhaps, may object to the translation of ὀργη by *ardour*, which signifies *the heat of love and affection*; not discovering how *love* can be manifested *against* ungodliness, &c. But, to do away this objection, it only need be observed, that just in proportion as love, or the heat of affection, arises in *favour* of the sinner, it must also appear *against* the *sin*, or whatever, if suffered to continue, would ultimately injure the *sinner*.

things" (Acts, xviii. 17)—many others are so prepossessed in favour of the doctrine which is here proved false, that they will feel wounded that any one should undertake to write against it—others may turn over the leaves till they cast their eyes on some passage that displeases them, and, taking umbrage at this, they will throw the work aside, concluding that it is nothing but a piece of scurrilous invectives—others may be prevailed upon to read it through, and believe the author candid and sincere; yet, as this work contradicts the writings of so many of the learned clergy, the learned and reverend A. M., and the still more learned and reverend D. D., it cannot be correct. Yet such ones are willing to forget, how many opinions their learned clergy have rejected of the learned Popes, Cardinals, and Bishops of the Romish church, all of whom, also, believe in the doctrine of *endless misery!* But, after all these impediments, the author does not despair: but hopes this work will do some good. And, if it should be instrumental, in the hands of God, of delivering any, even a few souls, from the fear of eternal torments!—if it should pour in the balsam of comfort into the wounded spirit of an affectionate father—bind up the broken heart of a fond and tender mother—speak peace to the trembling bosom of some troubled soul, mourning over the loss of a departed relative or friend, with the awful apprehension that it has gone to *endless misery*, to be tormented with *devils* and *damned spirits*, even as long as God shall exist, merely because it gave no evidence of its being a partaker of renovating grace, previous to the dissolution of the body (being perhaps killed instantaneously)—if such, or any of the above effects, should be the happy consequences of these lectures, let God have all the praise—the writer has only discharged a duty which he owed to his brethren and the public.

THE END.

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